

his Month's Best Fiction

SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

MARCH
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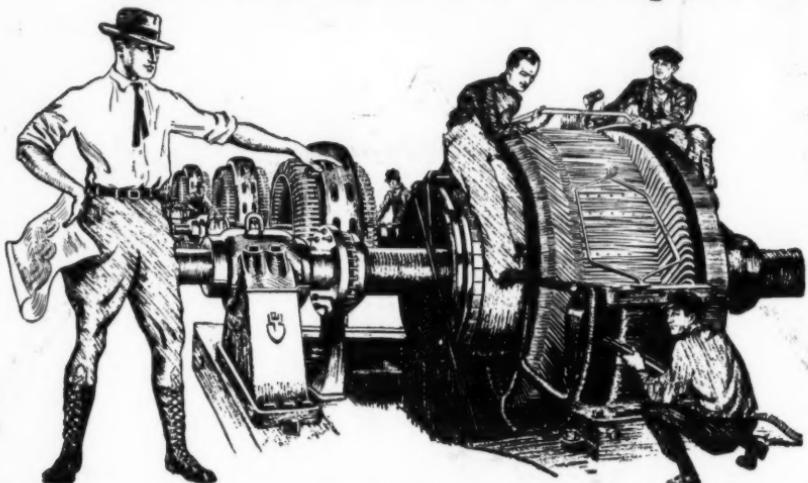
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No. 5

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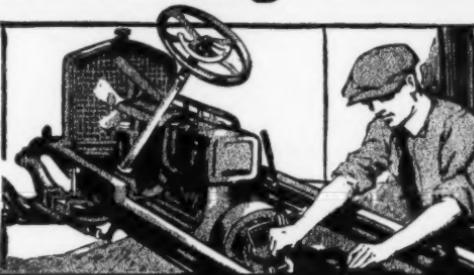
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The Amazingger Print tives Wanted that Puts Men In \$10,000 a Year Class

By J. E. Greenslade, President, N. S. T. A.

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"My earnings for March were over \$1,000 and over \$1,800 for the last six weeks, while last week my earnings were \$356." *L. P. Overstreet, Dallas, Texas.*

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you are doing now, you will bring to you full proof of the wonderful system of Salesmen's Training and Free Employment Service of the National Salesmen's Training Association.

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It Happened to Nickolas

By Abby Merchant

Author of "Presentiment," "The Eternal Maternal," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

Nickolas is "different," odd and queer enough to have stepped out of life itself. This story of his awakening to real life and love is one that will broaden your sympathies and understanding.

NIKOLAS listened; the drying foliage about him rustled in the hardly perceptible stirring of the air. Along the Drive above, a single limousine went by, advancing behind a cone of light and disappearing down the small end of it; a river craft sent up a solitary hoot which hung in his memory, a white streak on the night. All other noises which came to him were only the outer rings of sound waves arising in the never-sleeping section of Broadway and Forty-second Street and reaching him in blurred and broken ripples.

He was standing at the foot of the little hill on which Grant's Tomb is built, just where Riverside Park rises to the level of Riverside Drive; and it was from these signs of the city and not from the full October moon, already sloping down the western sky, that Nickolas ascertained the time of night.

"It must be something after one o'clock," he said. Then it was that his ear caught the sound of footsteps.

His first thought was that these, too, came from a distance. He found, however, that he could locate them defi-

nitely as approaching along the lower path, the path on which he himself was standing. This put a different face on the matter. In a lonely spot at a lonely hour it was perfectly possible that he was being followed with the intent of robbery. He was not alarmed, however. Nickolas Quaerts was stockily built and twenty-seven. He knew he was a match for the average thug. Nevertheless he was very much annoyed. He had a deep-rooted objection to getting himself, as he put it, "involved," and, as the footsteps were approaching with considerable rapidity, he stepped into the shadow of a clump of forsythia which emphasized a curve in the winding path. He suspected the man meant to overtake him before he emerged from the obscurity of the park into the open Drive, and, in that case, the steps would soon be lost on the grass, for no sensible footpad would clatter up to his victim on the asphalt. Perhaps, knowing he had halted, the man meant to mislead him by keeping on a while and then, making a sudden detour over the lawn, to come up on the farther side of him.

Every second was bringing the man



nearer, and Nickolas was measuring the progress of every footfall when, with a dreary, long-drawn wail, there came "chuff-chuffing" up the tracks along the river an endless length of freight. No sound could live above its complex noisiness, and aware that now, quite unannounced, his assailant might debouch directly around the curve upon him, he stood poised for attack in either direction. Suddenly there flitted through the moonlight before him—a girl.

He stepped out into the path and looked in the direction she had gone. The shrubs and curves of the winding way at first concealed her, but he noticed some of the steps surmounting the hill were well lighted, and in a little while he had a good view of her, silhouetted against the white asphalt.

She was slender, rather tall, and very erect. Strangely enough, in the brief view he had before she disappeared again into the shadow, he got the impression she was what his mother would call a "gentlewoman." But, of course, that could not be, he reasoned, since she was out alone at that time of night. For in the society Nickolas frequented no woman walked from the corner of the Avenue to the middle of the block after dusk unattended by a maid or a male escort.

He stared up the path for several seconds after she had vanished, and then, although he had intended returning upon his route at this point, he walked to the nearest bench and sat down. He wanted to think about it. What in the name of common sense could bring a girl out at that time of night? He had met women alone in many kinds of places, but he had never met one, intent merely on minding her own business, alone, at one o'clock in the morning, and never in a park. It didn't seem possible she was going home, for the women in this section would not have been on foot at that hour, even if alone. It seemed no more

possible that she was, like himself, out for pleasure. Yet, if she was on an errand, why choose the meandering way through the park? It rather piqued his interest, piqued it enough for him to remain sitting on the bench to see if she might not return, but not enough for him to follow her to see where she might be going.

But a good ten minutes passed and she did not come back. Nickolas, however, remained on the bench. He was not exactly tired, but after the nervous excitement of the holdup which did not come off he had a pleasant feeling of lassitude. Then, too, the night was beautiful, for when everybody was safely back from the country, October had presented the city with a week of genuine summer heat, and although the days were intolerable the nights were deliciously relaxing and balmy. So he remained, indulging a pleasant sense of inertia as only a man can do who has no responsibilities for the following day.

Turning his face upriver, he leaned forward, clasping his hands between his knees and resting his head against the gas-pipe railing which marked the boundary of the park. Below him a forty-foot wall dropped sheer to the river, level with the New York Central tracks, and, idly following the line of the shining rails, his eyes came to rest a hundred yards or so up the line upon a blunt point of barren land projecting out from the river bank. For many months it had been an unsightly dump, but recently it had been graded and covered with loam. From where he sat it looked as smooth and soft as a piece of brown velvet. Partly because the position of his head made this the natural focus for his eyes and partly because there was something soothing in its color and texture, he watched it with lazy fixity. It was some time before what he saw registered an impression on his mind.

"Hullo?" he questioned softly. "Do I see somebody down there?"

He sat up slowly, looking hard at the dump.

About it the river drew with shimmering tensity toward the harbor. Overhead the heavens were spread with short ripples of cloud, which, although they never quite obscured the moon's light, caused such rapid alternations of paleness and intensity that the eye was bewildered and stationary objects even gained a semblance of movement under the constant shift and play of light. Nickolas squinted his eyes in an effort to hold the surface of the dump steady between the shimmer of the ebbing tide and the wavering light of the moon.

"Perhaps it's just a dog," he said.

Then he saw a black point gradually projected from the smooth outline of the upper bank against the whitish gleam of the water. A hundred yards away, it was yet distinguishable as wearing the dress of a woman.

"I—I guess it's only the night watchman on patrol," said Nickolas with a nervous little smile. At the same time a voice seemed to whisper significantly, "Nobody has need to be in that place; nobody has need to be in that place."

Unconsciously he was clinging rigidly to the railing with both hands. Within him, his heart was jumping and thumping as if it were trying to get loose of its moorings of veins and arteries. It seemed to him that a great many voices were now shouting at him.

"That's the girl!" they cried. "She is going to drown herself. That's why she was out so late alone. She was out so late, alone, because she was going to kill herself. Stop her! Stop her! Stop her! That's the girl who just walked by you, alive; in five minutes she will be dead. Somebody—somebody save her."

He was terribly confused. He tried to think where he had last seen a po-

liceman. He ought to tell somebody, but there was nobody to tell. He felt cornered and frightened. If the voices would only stop shrieking in his ears, he thought he might know what to do. But they went right on:

"You are going to see a woman kill herself! A woman is going to die, by her own hand, before your eyes! This is terrible—horrible—terrible—horrible—"

He felt he could not stand it any longer. Mechanically he reached for his hat that lay beside him, put it on and, rising, turned his back and walked away.

Action silenced the voices, but his knees were weak, and a nausea was slowly diffusing through him. Moreover, he now saw the scene of horror ahead of him. No matter which way he looked he saw that girl standing by the river, and sometimes she was actually throwing herself in it. The phantom was so much worse than the reality that to reassure himself it had not actually happened he turned his head and looked behind him. The line of the upper bank lay smooth and unbroken against the fluid silver of the tide; the figure had disappeared.

Nickolas' body followed his head with surprising rapidity, and with a sudden setting of his jaw he shot up the path.

At the place where he had seen her last, he got out a pocket flash light which he used to light himself to his room when he returned late, and rapidly scanned the ground. There was no sign of any clothing, but the earth was displaced as if some one had climbed down the slope and, to his relief, he saw a line of footsteps a few feet below the top. She had merely taken advantage of the heavy shadow which shrouded the upper bank to make her way unseen to a point nearer the open current. This piece of method

gave him a sense of approval. Most women wouldn't have noticed that the tide was on the ebb, but, bent on killing themselves, would have dropped in anywhere. With the satisfactory feeling that he was dealing with a reasonable person, he replaced his flash light and, loosening his outer clothes as he went, he walked, to the accompaniment of long, deep, lung-filling breaths, toward the point of the dump. His steps made no noise on the loam, no river sound broke the silence, and so, when a few feet from the end, he could hear quite clearly the swish of water cautiously displaced, and then the unmistakable sound of swimming.

At the first movement of water he had covered the remaining distance to the edge of the bank, and he now stood almost directly above the swimmer. A couple of strokes and he could have got her, but the swimming was so contrary to his expectations that again he completely lost his head. Still fumbling at the buttons of his coat, he watched her for a full moment before he noticed that her strokes were labored and uneven. She was neither a strong nor a practiced swimmer and she was heading straight toward the flow of the tide. Still hoping to reach her before she sank, he cursed his stupidity and hurried out of his



"If there's one of you, there's more of you," sniffed the lady.

coat. But while his eyes were on her, she reached the edge of the current, her movements ceased, and she quietly sank.

Nickolas had never experienced such deep humiliation. As he saw the girl sink, his sense of inefficiency and failure wrenched him with real pain.

He faced grimly downstream and waited. She came up about where he thought she would, and, only stopping to calculate the point of her next appearance, he flung himself far forward into the water and made for it with a neat, racing stroke. She rose to the surface within reach of his hand and,

as he had been taught, he seized her by the hair and towed her quickly to shore, no more than fifty yards from the point where she had entered the river. As he lifted her from the water, she gave a long sigh.

"She's still got air in her lungs," thought Nickolas with satisfaction.

He laid her down on the muddy bank, and squatted on his heels beside her. That done, he was beset with perplexity. What should he do to bring her to? If she were a man he would just go ahead with first aid, but he feared that was a little harsh for a woman. Then he really ought to feel of her to see whether or not her heart was beating and whether or not she was breathing. And, if it turned out that her heart was all right and her breath was regular, he would have been very rude. This was perturbing enough, but, added to that, he was experiencing for the first time in his life a really violent emotion. He had succeeded in saving a human life, but he had not expected to feel this hilarious, unrestrained, all-pervasive happiness about it. Even in the perplexity of how to handle the unconscious girl, he wondered why no one had ever told him how good it felt to save some one.

"I hope I'll have a chance to do it again," he thought greedily, and by way of easing this unaccustomed emotionalism he said aloud, "I thank Heaven I can swim."

"I don't," murmured a voice below him wearily.

The girl's body lay in the shadow of a little wharf, and he could dimly see the outlines of her figure. He was sure she had made no movement, but the voice was so near there was no mistaking its source. All he could say was:

"Aren't you unconscious?"

"No," she answered in the same flat, weary tone, "I wasn't in long enough. Nor did I exhaust myself by struggling," she added pointedly.

That she should obtrude the awkwardness of the situation like that seemed to him rather tactless. He was on the point of becoming very embarrassed when the girl began to sit up. This brought her up out of the shadow, and he forgot everything in his curiosity to see what she looked like. He had a good view, for her face was upturned to the moon as if the weight of her hair, dripping behind her, were pulling her head back on her shoulders.

She had an oval face, with a delicately pointed chin, and, in the moonlight, surrounded by the wet blackness of her hair and clothes, her skin looked creamy white and luminous. Her eyes were only dark hollows and her lips were colorless, but he felt vaguely pleased with her appearance.

"I feel," he said, with the severe dignity of sixty years or so, "that I was very fortunate to be here."

She was silent, but more as if she hesitated in what she was about to say than as if she were at a loss for words. He waited eagerly. At last she said in a low voice:

"I'm afraid you were very unfortunate to be here."

"Why?" he asked in surprise.

Again she paused with that same deliberative silence.

"Because, having saved my life, you will have to be responsible for my living."

"For your living," he repeated.

"Yes. For the bread which I will have to eat if I must live; for the clothes I shall have to wear if I must live; for the roof I shall have to sleep under if I must live."

She ceased abruptly, and the silence which settled between them was so complete that it seemed never to have been broken. At last Nickolas said nervously:

"Why, I can't, you know." Then suddenly he felt very angry. Here had he just saved her life!

"I won't," he said.

"Very well," murmured the girl. Rather tremblingly, yet pushing aside the hand he instinctively put out to help her, she arose to her feet.

Without having the necessary slang to express it, Nickolas felt he had called her bluff. "Where are you going?" he asked, largely from curiosity.

"Back up there," she returned, her eyes following the outline of the dump, jutting into the river. Then, after what seemed a long period of time while she regained her balance, she announced more to herself than to him—indeed, he had a queer feeling of not being there at all—"I have got to go through it *all over again*."

Nickolas got hastily to his feet. "I forbid it," he said.

She walked on, a little weakly, but as one so wrapped in her own thoughts that outside sounds were meaningless.

"I say," said Nickolas, walking after her, "that I forbid it. If you do, I shall give you in charge. Suicide is a crime."

She continued to plod on through the mud, merely looking back over her shoulder to say, "You forget that suicide was made legal in New York last year. I am quite within my rights."

There were some matters on which Nickolas' mind worked with rapidity, and one of them was "rights," particularly *his* rights. Whatever hers might be in the matter of suicide, she was trading on them now to secure money, and he began to search his memory for what his Blackstone had to say on that head. The case had no precedent, apparently. She wasn't threatening to take his life, which would warrant him into agreeing to support her and forfeiting the agreement as made under compulsion; nor was it blackmail since she threatened no disclosure of the Quaerts' family skeletons. He decided, however, that she was not likely to know much about it and he could risk it.

"Blackmail," he said sarcastically, "is a crime in any State."

She wheeled on him so suddenly that he all but fell against her, the denser darkness which was her figure vibrating with anger.

"Look here," she challenged, "did I ask you to save me? Did I make any public display of my intention and so tacitly ask for rescue? I selected an hour when people are least likely to be abroad; I selected a night when it would be difficult to make out a moving figure against any background; I even counted on the few strokes I could swim to get me into the river quietly. I took every precaution not to attract notice. Didn't I take every precaution?"

"Yes, yes," agreed Nickolas hastily, for he had never seen any one display such violent feeling.

"You may think," she went on, "that it is an easy thing to take your own life, but it isn't. It took me six months to work up to this. Six months of the agony of living as I live. Six months of the agony of thinking of not living at all. I can't go through it all over again," she wound up wildly. "I can't go through it again—the third time."

"The second," he corrected her mechanically.

"No," she cried passionately, "the third, the third!"

"You've tried it before?" he exclaimed.

"I tried it last spring," she answered with a sob.

Nickolas' eyes widened. Violent emotion never seems quite real to the person witnessing it, and Nickolas, who had known no great griefs or sorrows, had not the help to understanding of similar experience. He could regard her suffering only with curiosity. He did not even realize the need of simulating sympathy.

"How did you do it then?" he inquired naïvely.



"Here now," he said, "you go up and give her these flowers. Don't say anything about
to thank me—er—tell her you'll

She was in such a desperate condition of mind she did not resent the egoism of his interest. Perhaps any interest at all was welcome to her.

"I went to a bathing beach in Staten Island," she answered. "I took all the money I had and got a bathing suit so it would look like a swimming accident; I took every precaution then, too.



me, but if she—if she should wish
see that I receive the note."

An awfully nice Englishman rescued me. He gave me a lecture on swimming, when I came to. Oh, I'll never forget the moment when I came to and found I was alive! I thanked him because I didn't know what else to do, and he seemed so pleased with what he'd done. I was crushed by the cruelty of it.

"That night I waited on table in a restaurant to get money for my dinner and fare back to New York."

The recollection set her in motion. With an air of determination she lifted her shoulders erect and, turning, walked on. Nickolas got around in front of her.

"I wish you'd stop and think a moment."

She shook her head. "If I stop," she said, "I shall lose my nerve. Now I feel so bitter against existence, so weak physically, that I haven't any repulsion about dying."

"But you can't make people you don't know responsible for you just because you don't—don't enjoy living." He was following her again.

"Don't worry about that," she said, with a sort of weary patience. "It was just that I made up my mind that if any one interfered again, when in all fairness I had taken every precaution—I did take every precaution?"

In giving herself no loophole for rescue, she had evidently acted on principle. Sticking to principles he understood.

"You were as careful and thorough as I would have been myself," he said heartily.

He specified "thorough" because that was a quality he admired. He wanted to show her that he was not unconscious of the really admirable things about her. Nickolas always tried to be just, even where he could not approve.

"Yes, I am thorough," she said. "I always had that reputation at home. That's why it seems so hard to have to

go through it all so many times. But if you will leave me now, I think—I think I can treat it as just an interruption."

He could not help noticing how different her voice sounded in the first part of that speech and the last. It was almost bright when she began, but in the end it was flat and tired.

"If I could get her mind off of this business," thought Nickolas, "I think I could get her home all right. I'll just ignore it." Aloud, he said, "I am afraid you'll have to excuse my coming with you because most of my clothes are up there on the dump."

She looked quickly at him. In what light there was he showed up white and briefly clad.

"Oh, I hope you aren't getting cold," she cried, clasping her hands.

Nickolas felt again that he was talking with quite a different girl. If he could only keep her talking in that voice he should have no difficulty with her at all.

"I think not," he assured her pleasantly. "I'm not any more likely to get cold than you are."

"It doesn't matter about me," she said.

He saw immediately that he must keep her mind off herself. "It's a warm night, anyway," he remarked carelessly. "I think it's the last warm weather we'll have."

"Very probably," she answered.

Her tone expressed complete disjunction, not only from the weather and its vagaries, but from all things mundane. In the face of this perfect disinterestedness, his powers to "make conversation" failed him. Dumbness passed from her to him like a contagion; he thought of things to say, but expression left him whenever he turned toward her, plodding stoically on toward the dump.

To compensate for this inability to talk to her he began to talk volubly,

but in silence, to himself. He told himself that no one ever committed suicide in cold blood; it was always a case of temporary insanity. This girl was simply holding out to see if she could scare him into giving her money. That she put up a good defense and talked acceptable English was really just chance. She was a sort of blackmailer, and when she saw he didn't intend to be scared she would back down and go home.

The impulse to tell her this came to him. He turned jerkily to her. She was walking on the waterside, her figure outlined against its whitish shimmer. Within a foot of her, he knew that she was as alone as when he saw her standing on the river bank; that she was as impenetrably closed to outside influences as though she were even then sweeping harborward on the ebbing tide.

He said nothing.

They continued in silence until the dump obstructed their passage. Then, taking her elbow, he directed her steps landward to where the embankment met the level of the railroad bed. He helped her in the short climb her wet skirts made difficult, and they were once more at the spot where the adventure had started.

She stopped. Of the sentence which he had formulated in his mind he managed to articulate, "Clothes."

She gave a nod of understanding, and he was just about to start for them when he heard from below the noise of another train. He sat down suddenly.

"I'm a little tired," he said. "Do you mind if I rest a moment?"

"Until that train passes, do you mean?" she asked indifferently.

"No" said Nickolas, springing to his feet.

"Go get your clothes," she said. "Don't worry that I'll take that method. It's a nasty way and I wouldn't embarrass you to that extent."

He wanted to say, "You won't do it anyway," but once more the look of her, as she stood listlessly regarding the oncoming train, struck him dumb. His effort to overcome this silence gave him the appearance of being irresolute.

"You don't mind if I ask you to hurry?" she said.

Without a syllable he made for his clothes and the sheltering darkness. When he returned, completely garbed even to hat and overcoat, she was walking about nervously. He smiled inwardly. It was she who was getting scared. If she wanted to back down, for her to do it promptly would be so great a convenience to him that he felt he could afford to give her an opening.

"Please don't excite yourself," he said. "I am sure there is no cause for nervousness. Shall we start now?"

She stopped walking and laughed, a queer, high laugh. He saw her raise her hand to her mouth to quench it. An uncomfortable sense as of something going on which he did not quite grasp assailed him, but in a moment she held out her hand. She was coming. He took her hand, masterfully, although he didn't quite see the point. Her whole arm was trembling behind it.

"Don't feel sorry about this, will you," she said, "when—when you grow up? You wouldn't have done it, if you'd understood. And now, as you say, it's time we started. Good evening."

He was unaccustomed to forcing his way against any obstruction, and her tone was final. Before he knew what he was doing, he had politely pressed and relinquished her hand, lifted his hat, and stepped aside. She passed him, stiff as a sleepwalker, and made her way toward the end of the dump. He took a few wavering steps toward the tracks when that sickening weakness, to which he seemed to be becoming subject, fastened on him. He found himself at her side.

"To let human beings kill themselves," he said violently, "is contrary to nature. I've heard it said that no one commits suicide except under pressure of the immediate moment. If you really mean to do it, at least tell me why. It may be for some little reason that you'll regret."

"I think I can be measurably sure I won't regret it," she answered patiently.

"I mean," he argued, "that I may be able to convince you that it is only the mood of a moment."

As he said it, she regarded him with something like puzzlement, but despair is always patient.

"I suppose it is true," she said, "that few people are able to distinguish between the unhappy circumstances of the moment and the general trend of circumstance. But I can assure you this is not impulse with me. You have no idea how repellent the thought is to me even now, just because you have been a little friendly, because your voice has been a little kind. No, it is the slow, general trend of circumstance that has made me see I shall make a mistake if I try to—see things through."

He remembered that she had wanted money.

"Anybody can earn a living," he argued.

"You think that," she said, "because you have succeeded. I suppose you earn a very good living."

She paused as if expecting a reply, but he made no answer. Why, he wondered, should she suppose he earned his living.

"I—I—" he stammered.

"And I dare say you were educated for a profession," she went on.

With no reason at all Nickolas felt awfully irritated with his mother. If she had only encouraged him, he would have gone in with Van Cuyper, Stuyvesant & Barring. He realized now that he had wanted to from the first.

"I—I—" he said.



He stayed an hour. "I don't think he took his eyes off of me the whole time he was here," Greta told her mother afterward.

"Well," she said, perhaps taking his stammering for modesty, "I was educated for nothing except to have a good time and to marry. I could have made a good wife and a good mother—if I could have been taken care of. But I don't know how to live life on the terms it's offered me, now. I am losing what strength I had. I might go as a domestic servant, I suppose, but after all is life—just mere existence—worth anything?"

She answered herself by turning toward the river, but, as on an afterthought, she stopped.

"You, a successful professional man, with friends of your own sort and class, you wouldn't like digging ditches and living with the gang?" she asked over her shoulder.

Nickolas stepped forward and caught her roughly by the arm.

"Have you got a roof you can sleep under to-night?" he demanded.

She felt about in her wet clothes. "I've still got the key to the place I lived this week," she answered.

"Then I'll take you there," said Nickolas. "But you realize I'm in a horrible position. My mother wouldn't approve of this for a moment. She's very strait-laced, you know." He fingered his lip nervously and struggled to control his shaking voice. "I shall have to think this out alone," he quavered.

She looked at him. She looked at his splendidly set-up figure, dressed in clothes which even in the moonlight conveyed the impression of expensive tailoring, to his blond face which wore the expression of a troubled child. Her own expression changed from contempt to a sort of amused pity.

"Existence is a struggle, isn't it?" she said.

He looked up at her bewildered. "That's it," he cried, "I don't know. I don't know anything about it. But come, let's get away from this. To-morrow, to-morrow——"

Seizing her by the hand as though fearing she would escape, he dragged her across the tracks and up the path to Riverside Drive.

CHAPTER II.

Nickolas Quaerts belonged to that almost extinct group of New Yorkers spelling their names with an "ae" or a "uy" or a "yy" or a "van," who have somehow managed to live their lives almost untouched by the changes of the gigantic town their forefathers founded. Owning a farm or two in the region of Forty-second Street, or Riverside, they have merely clung to their land, from generation to generation, and reaped its golden harvest much as their ancestors reaped its corn and oats. The tide of social change has foamed about their doorsteps, but they have not been swept into its flood, until now, having

spent their lives in what is virtually still a village created and maintained by their aloofness, they are nonentities in the life of a city peculiarly their own. They are the aborigines of New York, marveling at and disapproving of the manners and customs of twentieth-century Manhattan, and, when on foot, they are regarded by its assimilated immigrants from Podunk and Wakeska as queer and countrified.

Their homes, those square, brown-stone monuments to family solidarity, have a scheme of interior decoration nicely balanced between a mausoleum and the hotel parlor of the period. The heaviest, most elaborately carved black-walnut furniture in existence can be found in them. On their abundant tables the roast is still reinforced with a platoon of five vegetables; salad means chicken or lobster; and the ladies still leave the gentlemen at coffee. They are strictly conventional, but the conventions they observed are outworn to the point of being eccentricities. Yet, in their own minds, they are still the high society of the city. And they are of it, although distinctly not in it. That there are few young people in this select circle is easily understood. They either die from inertia at birth, or fade away, as energetic young people always fade away from little villages.

Out of this picture Nickolas had stepped to rescue an unknown girl of the lower classes, as he would have said, from drowning, and thereby become responsible for her life. No wonder he turned on the light in his bedroom with the feeling that he would find everything changed. When he found it all as he had left it, the sense of strangeness was transferred to himself. Through the emergencies by which most men find themselves, Nickolas had lost his identity. For he had been trained to regard himself first and last as a Quaerts. His surname was so branded on his soul that his whole duty

in life had presented itself as being "Quaerts," as his father and grandfather had been before him, and he had, so to speak, lost sight of all that would have made him "Nickolas." When he acted without precedent, as he had just done, he had no standard by which to measure his action.

"But you can't let a human being die before your eyes," he argued, tossing in his bed. He turned on his left side and felt his heart beat. "I wonder," he thought, "if I should have taken her to a druggist and got her some aromatic spirits of ammonia. What will I do if she gets sick?"

He pondered this horrid possibility. He would have to get a doctor. She would have to be sent to a hospital. And it would all have to be done secretly because he could not confess his humiliating position. The best idea would be to assume another name and pay everything with cash. But, if she were very sick and they wanted to consult with the person responsible for her, he might run across some one who recognized him. Suppose she should die! She distinctly said she had no relatives. What would he do? But, at least, that would end the matter. But then he would have saved a life to no purpose.

He was too thrifty to wish his efforts wasted like that, and with some satisfaction he reminded himself that, after all, she hadn't as far as he knew caught pneumonia. Still—

"Damn it!" he said, his face screwed up into a knot. "If I could have given her money enough to let the matter slide—"

This recalled how, when he had pressed that handful of money upon her, she had told him her name, Mary Turnbull, just as if she intended to repay him some time. He smiled skeptically.

"Probably thought I'd tell her mine."

But he hadn't. He had too much

of his grandfather Quaerts' caution for that.

"As long as she doesn't know what my name is," he thought, squinting shrewdly into the darkness, "I'm safe. I can drop the whole thing to-morrow. She hasn't the slightest hold on me. And she's bright enough to realize it, too," he added.

Watching his ceiling whiten under the first light of morning, it occurred to him that there was something unjust in a scheme of existence which would let another person's life bother his like this.

"Nobody," he fumed, "ought to have such an unpleasant life that she wants to kill herself. Why didn't her parents provide for her? Mine did for me. Why should I have to be responsible for her because the people that ought to have looked out for her didn't? It's unjust to me and—great Scott, it's unjust to her!"

He contemplated this flaw suddenly discovered in the perfect scheme of existence.

When Nickolas awoke, the house man had just placed his breakfast tray on a table. It might have been sitting on his chest and he would have been conscious of no greater physical depression in that region. A full moment passed before he became aware of what caused the sensation and, remembering, his first decision was to let the whole thing slide, to forget it. In the plain light of day it seemed absurd that he should assume the responsibility for a girl whom he should probably not know if he saw her on the street, and whom, moreover, he need never see again. For had he not craftily suppressed all clews to his identity so that she could cause him no annoyance in the future, even if she would? What more simple than to go on bathing and dressing and eating as if nothing had happened?

It was a relief to find it all so simple



"I can't say just when I'll be able to pay that five hundred back," she said earnestly, "but as I was going to say——"

in the morning. His worrying, sleepless night was the most vivid impression left of the whole occurrence. Almost, but not quite, at peace with himself, he walked into his bathroom, where the man had already turned on the tub. No sooner had his glance fallen on that harmless vessel of water than something like a panic seized him. Suppose she had drowned herself in a

bathtub! It had been done; he had read of it.

It seemed to him suddenly that he could not endure to go through the regular routine of dressing, lest in the meantime, realizing that he might not come to her as he had promised, she yield to the temptation which lurked in a simple bathtub.

He rushed into his clothes and shaved

with lightning rapidity, only to experience, at the completion of his toilet, a horrible revulsion to seeing her. What plan had he to offer her? Shouldn't he wait until he could think out something?

He tried his best to think, but he could not concentrate; it seemed less on account of his confused brain than by reason of the complete unsettlement of his whole ego. Whenever he tried to consider some way by which she might earn her living, he immediately began to wonder if he could earn his own, as she had supposed he did; he thought he would like to know if Van Cuyper, Stuyvesant & Barrington would reopen the offer they had made him. He became impressed with the necessity of consulting them before he had a chance to tell his mother he was thinking of it and so have her discourage him again. But in the meanwhile what might not Mary Turnbull be doing? And one immediate necessity being uncommon in his experience, two, pressing their immediateness and necessity upon him, made him diddle mentally like a donkey between two bales of hay.

He was still undecided as he stood on his doorstep, but across the roofs of the houses, the upper windows of the Hotel Plaza loomed over at him and, almost before he knew it, he was aboard a Fifty-ninth Street crosstown car. He had recalled stories of people who threw themselves out of high windows to instantaneous death.

He transferred at Columbus, and as he jolted up that avenue the cross streets became dingier and dingier, the children in them thicker and thicker. Arriving at the address in his notebook, he found all he had pictured; both the street she lived on, and the house, which he had anticipated chiefly through his sense of smell. He punched the fourth bell on the side of the dirty vestibule and, carefully avoiding contact with the

wall, gingerly leaned his ear to the speaking tube. In spite of the nerve-shaking quality of the voice that answered, he managed to ask politely if Miss Turnbull were at home.

"She ain't here no longer."

"Gone!" shouted Nickolas.

But there was no response. The interview was apparently at an end.

"Not there! Gone!"

He consulted the notebook in which he had written her address, turning the leaves with a shaking hand. Yes, this was the house, number one-fifty-one. He reached to press the bell of the apartment, but the memory of that coarse-grained voice deterred him. Why come in contact with that sort of person? If Miss Turnbull wasn't there, it was probably because she did not care to see him.

The reflection that the only money Miss Turnbull had was the dollar and a half he had given her the night before checked this easy escape from his troubles.

"It's because she's planning to get beyond the need of any necessity," he thought, and, the door being open, he went running up flight after flight of smelly stairs.

"I told you she warn't here," grumbled Miss Turnbull's one-time landlady, "an' if I'd known she had anything to do with *your* sort, she wouldn't have stayed here as long as she did."

"I tell you I never met her till last night," said Nickolas icily.

"If there's one of you, there's more of you," sniffed the lady.

They now improvised on these three sentences for about ten minutes. Talking to the woman was like those dreams in which one struggles to run and remains in the same place.

"All I am trying to find out is—where is Miss Turnbull gone?" he cried at last in exasperation.

"And all I say is that she's well out the way of you and your sort."





"You don't mean she's dead?" breathed Nickolas.

His obvious terror broke the circle of her ideas. "Lord, no! She's moved."

"Where to?"

"Why, I dunno."

"Didn't she leave any address?"

"What would I want of her address?"

He made no answer, but stood looking at her until she moved uneasily beneath his focused gaze.

"Are you a relative of hers?"

"No," said Nickolas shortly. Then, seeing she was about to start off again on the subject of his "sort," he determined to head her off once for all. She seemed to want positive identification.

"I am," he said firmly, "a lawyer."

He rather expected the statement would startle her as much as it did him, but she took it quite calmly. She came up close to him and whispered, with raised, insinuating eyebrows:

"She ain't stole something?"

"Certainly not," he said stiffly. "I wish to see her concerning her own affairs."

The landlady was one whose imagination of evil was exhausted by murder, immorality, and theft. "I never thought she was a bad one," she said. "The dago fruit man at the corner can tell you where she's gone. He took her things round for her in his pushcart."

But Nickolas was part way downstairs. He had spent fifteen precious moments getting that piece of information, and he arrived at the Italian's prepared, if the man showed symptoms of the landlady's dilatory style of conversation, to throttle the facts out of him. But the Italian was all interest.

"Sure, I tak-a da book-a, sure."

"Show me where you took them."

"Sure. I go da way, now. Sure. Com-a 'long."

They started, Nickolas walking on

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the curb and the Italian, with his two-wheeled delivery cart full of parcels, bobbing merrily along in the gutter beside him. He was full of talk, to which Nickolas listened with a condescension that periodically broke down into interest.

"Er—how did she look this morning?" he asked finally.

"Seek-a! Seek-a!" exclaimed the Italian vivaciously. "Need-a multi macaroni—need-a da Chianti. I don't think she eat. Giv-a da fruit some time. No monie."

"Did you?" cried Nickolas gratefully. "Oh, thank you!"

Despite his worry, he looked at this sample of the hated race with new interest. The agent who handled his tenement property had told him Italians were a destructive class of tenants. He remembered one had forced his way into the house once, a gesticulating, wild-eyed little man whom the servants had experienced great trouble in ejecting. And yet here was this one giving fruit to the girl he was responsible for, because she was poor, and in so doing, he had been doing Nickolas himself a favor. Was it possible that the agent could be wrong when he said they were all quarrelsome, destructive, and vicious? There must be a misunderstanding somewhere.

He decided hastily that he would look into the matter and with Nickolas, even a hasty decision was a promise. The Italian came to a stop.

"Great Scott!" cried Nickolas. "She doesn't live here!"

The Italian merely shrugged. "'Twas true, 'twas pity," declared his shoulders.

The house was across the street, and Nickolas looked it over with a sense of depression. He knew he owned some property in this part of the city, always referred to at home by its relation to the original Quaerts' farm. If by any chance this building was on the

"sheepfold," he thought it had better be called hereafter the "pig pen."

He glanced somewhat shamefacedly at the Italian, who was regarding it also with disapproval, and it occurred to him that even this mild-eyed man might become quarrelsome, vicious, and destructive if he had to live there. And why not be destructive? A bit of plaster more or less and a spoke or two out of the stair rail wouldn't matter in a house like that.

"Why do people want to live there?" he exclaimed.

"Nowhere else; no monie," suggested the Italian vaguely.

So people didn't want to live there. Mary Turnbull didn't want to. Indeed, she had preferred dying. And yet, he had always understood from his mother and the agent that the people who lived in such houses liked them that way.

"There's some misunderstanding somewhere," he said to himself. "I shall take time to ferret this matter out."

He stepped down off the curb.

"Good-a-by," chirruped the Italian.

"No, no," said Nickolas firmly. "You come with me." For his mind, which was beginning to show itself a hitherto unsuspected mine of horrors, had suddenly suggested to him why Miss Turnbull had moved from a fourth-rate apartment house into what was a plain tenement. She had taken a room there for the sole purpose of ending her life in it. He had read of people doing that before. Even now, while he was cogitating improvements on his real estate, she was perhaps drinking laudanum or carbolic acid or any of the usual things.

The Italian had difficulty in keeping up with him as he made for the door, but when his foot was on the stair his grandfather Quaerts' famous caution asserted itself and stayed his rash step.

Suppose the worst he imagined had happened and he should be the one to find her? He would be dragged into

all the papers and all sorts of awful significances put upon his presence at the bedside of the dead or dying girl. The bare idea of such a thing gave him a chill of fear. No, he could not go up and ask for her. Yet he must, he must find out.

"Say it with flowers," murmured something in Nickolas' head.

That ubiquitous phrase had irritated him a good many times, for, not needing advertisement himself, he condemned the practice in others. He would have admitted now, if asked, that there was something in it. Planting the Italian before the tenement, he made for the nearest florist shop.

Flowers to him never meant less than thirty or forty dollars. He purchased a bunch of roses and carried them back to the Italian.

"Here now," he said, "you go up and give her these flowers. Don't say anything about me, but if she—if she should wish to thank me—er—tell her you'll see that I receive the note."

His messenger departed in the gay spirit of romance, and pluming himself upon the immaculateness of his skirts, no matter what happened, Nickolas mounted guard over the delivery wagon. The children in the neighborhood gathered about him as he stood there, so under the influence of curiosity, fortunately for him, that they had not yet thought of removing the parcels from the pushcart. For he was obviously a man whose attention was absorbed by something at least five stories above his head. He was, indeed, trying to imagine what was being revealed to the Italian, and his imagination never having had much chance to develop along the line of other people's troubles, it would only hark back to the old, disturbing thought. It was a struggle to maintain an icily calm aspect under these circumstances, and when the Italian appeared with unmistakable tears upon his cheeks he entirely forgot himself.

"Is she? She isn't? She hasn't?" he cried, making toward the fruit man, while the abandoned delivery cart plunged head downward like a bucking broncho. Springing to the handles, the Italian dexterously checked the flow of parcels even as he spoke.

"She cry-a! I, too, cry-a." He touched his eyelids. 'So-o beyewtiful!' she say. 'So beyewtiful.' Then, 'Wait, Mistair Rossi,' she say. 'How can I thank heem?'

Here, like a good story-teller, he skipped the expository dialogue and rushed to the climax, presenting Nickolas with a piece of thick paper, obviously the flyleaf of a book. Nickolas opened it with no attempt to conceal his agitation. He read:

Oh, thank you, thank you for the flowers, I haven't had roses in my hands for years. But please don't think of me any more. I see now that it *was* blackmail, just as you said. And I'm going to try living again, for the thought of these roses will make me remember that there are bright spots now and then.

I have got work in a laundry.

Always gratefully yours,

MARY TURNBULL.

He kept on reading the note over and over in an effort to regain his poise amid the emotional currents rushing about within him. The Italian watched him until curiosity could endure no longer.

"You lov-a the young lady?" he asked tenderly.

"Great Scott, no!" thundered Nickolas. And then it occurred to him unpleasantly how entirely he had laid aside the dignity and reserve which it was his custom to maintain before inferiors. This corner fruit vender must be more intimately acquainted with him than any one he knew. He suddenly stuffed a bill into the Italian's hand, and, cramming Miss Turnbull's note into his pocket, he started abruptly back toward Columbus Avenue.

The Italian wondered, but it had

nothing to do with him. He wisely concluded that what was to be would be, and when, no later than that same evening, Nickolas again appeared in his shop, he followed his beckoning finger and asked no questions. Again they traveled the same route, but at the steps of the house in which Miss Turnbull lived, Nickolas handed him a heavy, sealed envelope, a slip of paper, and a pencil.

"Take this to the young lady," he said, tapping the envelope, "and tell her to write her name on this paper. Then come back. Don't hang around and talk to her, and don't give this envelope to any one but her." And once more, but with a mind complacent, he waited on the doorstep for the return of his messenger.

CHAPTER III.

Had he arrived a little sooner he could have delivered his message to Mary Turnbull himself, for, not ten minutes before, she had been standing in the place he was standing, taking a long breath before she started on the four-flight climb to her room. She had looked back into the street, where children swarmed like great sticky flies about the doorsteps, and up the fronts of the houses where women and more children leaned from the windows. She thought how wonderful it would be if she could just stop being, if that scene would just fade out of her sight forever and ever. Her shoulders dropped beneath the weight of existence, but then, out of the mingled smells of food and flesh, came a whiff of roses. It was only memory—she had been hanging over them all day and her system was saturated with their odor—but in her weakened condition she was superstitious and believed it to be a reminder of her promise to their giver. She lifted her shoulders erect and started up the stairs. When she reached her

room her eyes at once sought out the great bunch of pale-pink roses in her wash pitcher where, under the skylight, for it was a skylight room, each petal showed in perfect beauty. Without taking her eyes from them she threw herself upon her bed and gazed and gazed.

She remembered carrying such roses to dances at home in the New England town where she had lived before everything that meant home had disappeared and she had started so bravely, but so foolishly, to earn her living in New York. Looking at those roses it seemed that it couldn't be true that she was really Mary Turnbull, lying in that little box of a room; that it was Mary Turnbull who had just come from washing dishes for her supper in a cheap restaurant; and that to-morrow would find Mary Turnbull standing all day in a laundry learning to iron collars. It couldn't be—it just couldn't be.

But the weight of sadness in her heart told her that it was, and tears formed slowly in the inner corners of her eyes. Tears, which forced out like the sweat of pain, gave no relief.

"I can stand it," she thought, "as long as the roses live."

Some one knocked at her door close to the head of her bed and she jumped, terrified, to her feet. Was it the landlady going to insist on a week in advance after all? She wrung her hands and looked nervously toward the roses. Perhaps if she gave her some roses she might be willing to wait. But she remembered the woman and doubted if roses would have much value in her eyes.

"Come in," she said, her voice shaking.

It was Nickolas' messenger who, in his leisurely Italian way, had finally surmounted the four flights.

"Oh, Mr. Rossi!" she cried, and sat down on her bed, laughing hysterically.

She hadn't realized how frightened she was of that landlady.

But the fruit man gave her little time for thought on that subject. If there was another tip like the last one in quick work, it would be his.

"Put-a your nam-a here," he said sternly thrusting the envelope, paper, and pencil into her hand. "Queeck-a!"

"Why? What for?"

"Dunno. But queeck-a! Queeck-a! He says 'queeck-a.' He! You know heem."

Rossi had been nothing but kind to her, and since the roses she had a blind, unlimited trust in "heem." Had he written to her? Had he really not taken her word that he need not think of her again? Perhaps he had found something better than the laundry. Anything but the laundry or washing dishes she felt would be paradise. She signed, and Rossi, seizing the paper from beneath her pencil as she wrote the last "I," was halfway downstairs before her trembling fingers managed to tear open the stiff, manila envelope. Into her lap tumbled ten fifty-dollar bills.

For a moment she simply stared at them, her pupils dilated with surprise. It was money. Money—which bought food and clothes and shoes and a decent place to live. With a frightened movement she gathered the bills in her hand and sat on them. She didn't count them; all she was capable of thinking was that she had them. She had some money.

The roses were wan and gray in the twilight when her clenched hand relaxed from about Nickolas' gift; the thought that there might also be a note loosened her fingers. But it was with her left hand that she fumbled awkwardly in the envelope.

A note was there. She pulled it out and read:

MY DEAR MISS TURNBULL: Kindly move your things to the address given below, where

a room has been engaged for you and your board and lodging paid one month in advance. It will be sufficient to say that your cousin arranged for it in your name this morning.

As winter is approaching, in spite of the present misleading temperature, you will doubtless need a heavy coat, shoes, et cetera, which the inclosed will purchase.

Please do not regard this in the light of philanthropy, charity, or personal regard. I do this largely to insure my own peace of mind. If you do not comply with my request, remember you will be inconveniencing me.

Furthermore, may I ask you to take in a special supply of certified milk and eat as many eggs as possible. These, conscientiously taken, will go far toward rebuilding your constitution.

There was no name signed—oh, wise young man!—but there was the address of a boarding house in a select Park Avenue neighborhood.

Mary Turnbull clasped note, address, bills, and the envelope indiscriminately to her breast. To her unmaterialistic soul the husk his hands had touched was part and parcel of the treasure. He had freed her from the present and she dared see no farther beyond. Tomorrow she would be away from the poverty, the grime of this place; from the dirty children; the coarse women. She sat up all night reading her few familiar books and her note and worshiping her roses.

Nickolas, having secured his receipt from the fruit vender, went home to bed, where he slept like any one who is filled with complacency and is also a little short of sleep. He would have liked tremendously to know how she received the money, but the fruit man had not considered that in the agreement and Nickolas felt embarrassed about asking. On the following day, however, he ascertained that she had moved to the Park Avenue address.

Mary Turnbull settled, Nickolas had felt his soul would be forever more at ease, but no sooner was this accom-

plished than his mind ran on ahead to what he should do with her when she was well enough to take care of herself. She had told him she had no education to earn her living; it looked as if he would have to educate her.

"Stenography and typewriting is the thing," he said.

Straightway he started on an inquiry into that means of livelihood, and although the instructors told him it was a business offering wonderful opportunities, several stenographers to whom he applied told him that it was an over-crowded field. Allowing for the bias of each class of informants, he was still very much at sea. Besides, suppose she studied stenography, wouldn't she naturally expect him to offer her a position in his office? She supposed he earned his living, she had said so.

So Nickolas made his deferred visit to Van Cuyper, Stuyvesant & Barrings, explaining that if their offer to buy into the firm was still open, he had reconsidered his decision. It was not exactly in order to provide Mary Turnbull with a chance to earn her living that he did this, but nevertheless she had a great deal to do with it. It hung heavy on his conscience that she thought he had succeeded, where she had failed, so utterly.

It took him some time to adjust himself to his new duties. He missed his walks at night because, having to be in his office at nine, he had to go to bed early; he missed the hours that he spent in his gymnasium; the hours that he spent with his books. In short, he missed his freedom and his leisure, and because all that annoyed and depressed him, he began to look around him at other men and women who were enduring the same limitations or even worse, to see how they stood it.

His investigation along this line took him into many of the same places he had frequented in his old-time midnight walks, but the same scenes that he saw

then with impassive interest now wrenched him with pity, enraged him against injustice, or stimulated his mind to unexpected lines of thought. In compensation for this capacity to suffer, however, he developed also the capacity to be amused, and he found that much that had annoyed him in the old days now seemed only funny.

Looking over his tenements contributed much to his education, also. He was surprised to find how many different kinds of people lived in them. For one thing, there were people who kept their homes spotless, living beside unutterably slovenly families, and, when he thought of girls like Mary Turnbull living next this shiftlessness, he saw immediately that he must find some way to prevent the possibility of such dirt accumulating. With Mary Turnbull as his standard and norm he traversed his tenements.

"You are foolish to lay out more money on that house, Mr. Quaerts," remonstrated his agent, after listening to a long and expensive list of improvements.

"I dare say," agreed Nickolas pleasantly, "but I tell you frankly nothing would make me live in that house myself."

"But you don't have to; and the house is quite good enough for the kind of people that do."

"But there isn't any 'kind' that does!" cried Nickolas. "They're all different, honestly. It's the house that's the 'kind,' not the people. Lots of people who live in that house wouldn't, if they could help it. You can never tell—that's what worries me."

About this time he looked over his list of charities with the result that he stopped sending his annual remittance to some and increased it to others. One or two movements of an educational nature impressed him so that he took it upon himself to secure subscriptions from other people.

"Look here," he would explain, "suppose a girl comes into this city with no way of earning her living—cast out on the world with no practical education. She's sick, she's starving, she's on the verge of suicide. Then she hears of this institution I'm telling you of, where they will teach her to do something useful: dressmaking, millinery—er—stenography and typewriting. Do you prefer to see her changed into a sudden, water-soaked mass of decaying flesh when, with your help, she might have been a useful, competent stenographer?"

The vision of Mary Turnbull struggling doggedly back to that fateful dump and of the rescued Mary as she would be, sweetly taking dictation beside his desk, was always in his mind while he spoke. He never failed to get his desired subscription.

But he pursued other investigations inspired by Miss Turnbull of a more personal and concrete nature. One of the first results of this latter sort was the dispatching of a messenger boy to her new address with a ten-dollar note, and the following inclosure:

Kindly spend this for ice-cream sodas. They agree with women.

There were always women about soda fountains, he had observed, and they all looked bright-eyed and happy.

Then something occurred which enlarged his observation to include not only matters concerning women's health, but also concerning their dress. On this subject, however, he found himself so quickly out of his depth that he resolved to present the question diplomatically to one who might be considered expert on such problems.

Thus it came about that one evening, late in November, when Nickolas and his mother had finished dining and, with the formality that obtained between them, she had risen to leave him



"You see, they were all so cut of the same piece that, without looking, I couldn't tell the difference."

to his cigar and coffee, he surprised her by asking if he might take his coffee with her in the library. She gave a gracious permission and he followed after the rustle of her elegant half mourning, little suspecting the excitement stirring in her breast. For his mother entertained no lesser thought than that he was about to ask her permission to become engaged.

Mrs. Quaerts was one of those women who say their sons have no

secrets from them. If it was, or had been, true in Nickolas' case, she could take entire credit to herself, for she had seen to it that he knew none of the corrupting, mother-effacing influences of school and college. Private tutors, at least fifty per cent of them reverend, had conducted her boy's education, and when he traveled he traveled with her. Thus, utterly lacking in friends of his own age, he not only had no secrets from her, but he had

no secrets. Save for his midnight walks abroad, she could have put her finger on him at almost any hour of the day.

And so it was naturally his mother who had begun to think he should marry. True, she had intimated nothing of this idea to him, but she had always found him so compliant when she did make a suggestion that now, as they left the dining room, she had no doubt his mind was turning in that direction also, with a sort of super-agreeableness. Yes, Nickolas at last had awakened to his duty toward his family. That was what he wished to talk about. She was agitated, for, although she had thought about it for some time, it seemed a little sudden now it was upon her. However, she had a girl all picked out, one nicely balanced between "our circle" and the "gayer set," as she described her relatives and connections who made New York society. If Nickolas should ask her advice, as he undoubtedly intended, she was beforehand. She was, however, startled at the practicality with which he approached the subject.

"Mother, how much does it cost a woman to dress?"

"Dress how?" she inquired, not wishing to appear conscious of the obvious trend of his thought.

"Why, all over." Then, as her iron-gray eyebrows imperceptibly raised themselves, he hastily retracted the delicacy. "I mean, dress well."

"That depends," murmured his oracle. "Some women spend less money and dress better." This struck her as a chance to prepare the ground and diplomatically introduce a name. "Greta Irving rarely spends more than seven thousand a year on her clothes."

She looked at her son obliquely across the top of her coffee cup.

"Great Scott!" said he.

"That's very moderate, my dear Nickolas," she remonstrated.

"Oh, it wasn't that," murmured Nickolas abstractedly. "I was only thinking."

"Thinking of what?" With the pleasant firmness of a lady whose son always tells her all he thinks.

"Oh," he said carelessly, "I was just thinking that five hundred dollars wouldn't go far—er—with Greta."

This hesitation in referring to Greta was a good sign. She smiled at him, he looked so boyish and embarrassed.

"Five hundred would buy her a couple of evening frocks," she answered. Then, as if the thought had just occurred to her, she said, "Really, Nickolas, you ought to call on Greta oftener. She's an old friend of yours, and besides, it is time you thought of going out more. I sometimes feel that our family is losing its rightful place in society."

"I'll go see her to-morrow," said Nickolas agreeably, infinitely relieved that she did not pursue the money subject. "And now if you'll excuse me, I think I must look over some documents I brought home from the office."

His mother sighed. She had not sympathized with Nickolas in this business venture, but she had lived in the Quaerts family too long to think of crossing the will of one of her menfolk when he was once decided upon a course of action.

Nickolas went upstairs with more than his usual animation, but frankly, it was not to examine papers. Not that he wished to deceive his mother, but he really could not tell her the truth which was that he wanted to be alone to think over something which had happened to him that morning.

That morning he had dropped into an art gallery at his mother's request, and his own annoyance, to see if the exhibit there was worth her attention. In the past he had often saved her unnecessary labor of that sort, but it did seem to him that now she ought to re-

alize that such little commissions were not in keeping with the life of a business man. However, he had gone. The only other visitor there was a woman, a girl rather, and she had immediately attracted his attention. She was dressed quite plainly in black, with a touch of white, although she wore no furs, and no jewel or necklace relieved the plainness of her clothes. He had said to himself:

"Now, that is what I call a well-dressed girl."

Moreover, being himself thickset and stocky, he was attracted to height and slenderness in women, especially this woman. A few weeks ago he would have honored her with no further attention, but since his responsibility for Miss Turnbull, he had, as we have said, observed the habits and customs of women conscientiously. Now he took up a strategic position and observed this pleasing specimen at his leisure, for her back was as interesting as most women's faces.

In the middle of a good look, his gaze suddenly met a pair of soft brown eyes. She had turned to look at a picture behind him. Of course she let her eyes look through him, and over him, and around him, and then move casually on, as if he were only another picture in the exhibit, but during this elaborate feminine diplomacy he had time to get an impression of black, wavy hair, a pale oval face, and a little pointed chin which rested on the broad white ruff of her collar, and made him think of old Italian portraits. If she had not been so concerned in convincing this man that she did not know he had been looking at her, she would have seen him start and grow pale, for it was Mary Turnbull.

She still was thinner than he thought compatible with health, but he had a cultured taste in beauty and he thought her beautiful just the same.

"Why," he thought, "she might be

—why, anybody." But he was relieved that she did not recognize him.

"I can't keep too much out of this," he said to himself shrewdly. "After all, her looks may belie her, and as long as she doesn't know who I am there's no danger, whatever she turns out to be."

The impression he had of her, however, lingered pleasantly. She was well dressed and, if his money had got to be spent, he was thriftily glad to see it spent to such advantage. Then having, as it were, a possessive interest in her clothes, he began to wonder what they cost him. None of the good stores told the prices of the things in their windows and so it was the curiosity of the investor that at last had driven him to consult his mother. Now, sitting at his desk, his documentary alibi unheeded before him, he was thinking:

"Two evening frocks cost five hundred dollars. Evening frocks are made of thin things and can't cost as much as woolen things. At that rate, a suit and hat and shoes—why, that girl must be a wonder to look like that on such a pitifully inadequate sum!"

But Nickolas was not the lad to take one person's opinion on an investment concerning which he had so little knowledge himself. He determined to look over the economical Greta and get some idea of what she got for five hundred. Forthwith, armed, at his mother's suggestion, with a large box of bonbons for a good girl who only spent seven thousand on her clothes in a whole year, he went to call on Greta the next evening. He stayed quite an hour.

"I don't think he took his eyes off of me the whole time he was here," Greta told her mother afterward.

And indeed he had not. He was trying to calculate why a little silk and lace, hardly enough to reach from her knees to her shoulders, should cost anybody very much. If Greta got only

that much cloth in her dresses for seven thousand, why—Mary Turnbull, who was all covered up decently and taller to boot, must have been hard put to it. Upon this and similar reflections, he sent her the following day more fifty-dollar bills with this apology:

I find it costs more for women to clothe themselves than I had thought.

CHAPTER IV.

During the month of December, Nickolas saw Miss Turnbull several times, and shortly after he had increased her allowance she appeared in a new suit. This also was black, but it had touches of fur on it as the advancing season demanded. It was exactly such a suit as Nickolas liked to see on a woman. She looked as elegant, he thought, as any one with whom he would be likely to be acquainted.

Each time he noticed with satisfaction that her color was increasing and her face becoming more softly oval, but not to the detriment of her little pointed chin. There was something about her chin particularly which gave him a pleasant feeling all over. It made him wonder how she would look without her hat on, and thinking about that invariably made him feel that perhaps he really ought to call upon her and make himself known. But he always checked the impulse. As long as it was only a question of time before she became his stenographer, he felt it would perhaps be better if there were nothing in the nature of a social relation between them. Besides, when she became independent of his support, there would be no need for any other than a business association. She would be merely one of the many young women employed by the firm.

There were moments when he got that time. In fancy he pressed the buzzer on his desk and she appeared considerable pleasure from anticipating

promptly in the doorway. "Good morning, Miss Turnbull. Have you time for my dictation this morning?" "Always time for yours, Mr. Quaerts," was the invariable answer he provided her with on these occasions, and then the scene melted into a sort of pleasant blur.

In time he became so accustomed to the idea of her being his stenographer that when chance suggested a different career for her, it was something of a shock. One Sunday he met her on Fifth Avenue; indeed, by a little judicious planning he met her twice, accompanied by a young man. Both times it seemed to him that the man was finding her very attractive. He went home and thought about it.

Why had it never occurred to him that some one might marry her! Married, she would be off his hands forever, and he need feel no more responsibility toward her. What a remarkably simple explanation to all his worries.

"That fellow is obviously head over heels in love with her, too," he congratulated himself.

He congratulated himself on it so many times that at last he began to wonder what it was that had sent the man head over heels.

"Maybe it is just because she is so good looking," he thought. And then he remembered the fellow hadn't been looking at her either time, but had been listening to her with a singularly attentive expression. Could it be possible that what she said was always as interesting as it had been that night by the river? She had been interesting then all right. He realized, with a little surprise, that in his visions of her taking his dictation in the office, he had always counted on her lingering a bit, after she had got the letters, to talk. After all, would she be any happier as this other man's wife than as his own stenographer? He himself felt she would

be safer as his stenographer where he could always have an eye on her. He had begun taking care of her and he could go on. She wasn't much trouble; he didn't mind the responsibility.

But something told him the other fellow didn't either. He felt the momentous question must be decided before he made any more plans about her future education, and he determined to consult Greta.

For, by this time, Nickolas' attention to Greta was wearing a decidedly serious look. It was not that he was seen so much with her as that he was never seen with any one else. True, she did not receive him every time he called, because it bored her to talk to him for any length of time, but, presuming on their nursery acquaintance, she used him for a hundred little conveniences; he was so easily had to fill in when a dinner guest suddenly failed or to escort the extra girl at the box party. And what with her casual and continuous use of him and his extraordinary attitude toward her, for, if another man monopolized her attention, he seemed perfectly content to sit and watch her, their names were beginning to be coupled, and people were beginning to speculate on the magnitude of the united Quarts and Irving fortunes. Greta herself had begun to speculate, and her mother quite frankly said she thought it very queer that Nickolas said nothing definite. Thus, when his invitation to the theater, which arose from his Sunday meeting with Mary Turnbull, arrived, Greta canceled an engagement with a less promising suitor in favor of the theater with Nickolas.

"I suppose I shall really get to like him in time," she told her mother, who was watching her dress for the evening. "But he is awfully—well, amateurish, mother."

"A woman can make a man entirely over, if he is in love with her, and she keeps her own head," comforted her

mamma. If the heart was lost, the man was lost, apparently.

"He hasn't a thought for any other girl except me," mused Greta; "any one can see that. Then of course he's got mints. But he says such queer things. Why, the other night he asked me what the evening coat I had on cost! Fancy!"

"I hope," said her mother, smiling faintly, "that it was one you got at a sale."

"I thought of that," said her very intelligent daughter, "but I added two hundred instead. I didn't intend to establish a wrong precedent."

As Greta had confided to her mother, Nickolas did say queer things. He said some queer things that night at the theater.

"Greta," he asked, "do all women want to get married?"

Having been raised to that end exclusively, Greta blushed and said, "Oh, no. But women are happier married, I think."

"Would you be happier married yourself?"

"I suppose so," she murmured, looking down.

"No matter to whom?" persisted Nickolas.

"Heavens, no!" she said with a little shriek. "I wouldn't *think* of marrying a man unless I loved him *tremendously*."

She looked squarely at Nickolas, and Nickolas looked squarely, if somewhat abstractedly, at her.

"Funny what lemons some girls can love," he said as the curtain rose.

Greta said nothing, but she threw the scarf of her evening wrap over the intervening arm of their seats. Should Nickolas be moved to press her hand under its silken cover, why, her hand was there. But Nickolas was steadfastly regarding the stage, apparently lost to all save the action of the play.

He generally pursued his investiga-

tions in this unrivaled laboratory that Greta afforded him. It enabled him to find out what he wanted to know, and then gave him the uninterrupted space of the act to think over the data secured. The result of this experimental evening was one of the most startling in Nickolas' career, for a few days later he might have been seen in a fashionable tea room on Fifth Avenue.

He was standing, somewhat self-consciously, just inside the door, and he was terribly underfoot. As they squeezed between his stocky figure and the candy case, maids and dowagers alike favored him with annoyed glances. But Nickolas stuck to his post. He was waiting for Mary Turnbull and he did not mean she should attract attention in public by scanning the faces of various young men in search of him. As long as she was under his protection, he intended her to be subjected to no embarrassment, and so he stood and waited, his face glued to the glass door. It startled him considerably when a soft, level voice sounded at his very elbow.

"I hope I'm not late," said Mary Turnbull. She had come in by an entrance on the cross street.

With the awful gravity of reserved people, when suffering from self-consciousness, they walked to the table he had engaged. All he could think of was that at last he should see her with her coat off. He helped her to remove it and it disappointed him that her dress was black, too, but with a little movement of her hands she sent a cloud of thin, white stuff ruffling up about her throat.

As he turned to seat himself opposite her, he saw that the people behind were looking at her. He flushed with annoyance. He did not wish her to attract attention in that vulgar fashion, but when he sat down and looked up to speak to her, the words he was about to say died in his throat. She did not

look like any girl he had ever seen before. In her soft black dress with all that white spraying up behind her throat and losing itself in a point below her dainty chin, she didn't look like just a girl. She looked like a lily, like a pearl, like something white and luminous and priceless and, above all, not to be roughly handled by the world.

Instinctively he glanced about to the other tables. All the other women with their bright cheeks and red lips looked crude and dairymaidlike. He was filled with such a pride as he had never experienced. This pearl-white girl opposite him was his own creation.

"This," said Nickolas' ego, "is what I can do in the way of a woman."

After a brief consultation, he ordered their tea and then, because he had come to say a definite thing to her, it seemed to him he must drive at it.

"I wanted to see you," he began, "because I have been thinking—"

He stopped abruptly because two soft lights seemed to have been ignited opposite him. But it was only that Mary Turnbull had raised her eyes from the gloves she was removing.

"I have been thinking—" he repeated and frowned. For the life of him he couldn't remember what it was he had been thinking. She seized on the pause.

"Ah, but do you think I haven't been thinking?" she said rapidly. "For the first few weeks I didn't do anything except sleep and eat and see the things I wanted to see—pictures and the theater and the things in stores and all that. You've no idea how quickly you grow strong having nothing but pleasant things to do and thinking that some one's looking out for you and, for a little, you haven't got to worry. Why, every time you sent me flowers, I think I gained five pounds."

"That's exaggeration," said Nickolas.

She laughed delightedly.

"Oh, yes," she agreed, "but it did me real good, just the thought that you were thinking of me and that I wasn't for the time, just a waif."

"You ought not to talk like that," he said gruffly. "I told you that there was no—"

But it was so evident that the "personal feeling" which he was about to deny had meant much to her, that he did not finish his statement.

"It is to my advantage that you should have every aid in recovering your health," he said.

"Oh, I knew that was your reason," she hastened to acquiesce. "But how many men would have taken the trouble to think about it so much? Why, the money for the ice-cream sodas! I cried more over that than anything."

"Cried!" he exclaimed.

"What can you do," she asked, "when any one is so endlessly, wonderfully, marvelously kind—"

"This is beside the point, Miss Turnbull."

"I know; forgive me. I knew you wouldn't want me to thank you, because I wouldn't myself, if I were you, but my heart is so full—"

"You embarrass me," he interrupted coldly, "and your eyes are shining so that you are attracting attention."

"Oh, dear," she said, biting her lip, and he felt she was making an effort to turn off the light, so to speak.

"You know," she began in a second, "I know just what you are going to say."

"What is it?" he asked, for by this time he had no ideas at all on the subject.

"And I've got ahead of you!" she cried. She leaned slightly toward him and, if her eyes had shone before, he felt now that he was the witness of a private pyrotechnic display, not so private either! What would people think he was saying to her to make her look like that?

"You see," she went on, "the other day I went into a department store to see if I could find a bargain—"

"There is no need of your hunting for bargains," said Nickolas irritatedly.

"Oh, but sometimes you can buy things cheaper than you can make them," she objected.

"Make what?"

"Why, clothes. You didn't think that with nothing to do I bought my clothes, when I could make them fifty or seventy-five per cent cheaper. Why, clothes are exorbitant just now. And that reminds me—"

She pushed an envelope across the table. "That's the money I have left of what you've given me."

He looked at it blankly. In the corner was a neat sum in addition, with various dates appended.

"But this is nearly all I've given you."

"Yes."

She again leaned embarrassingly toward him and began to explain. He listened, feeling that he would have been irritated if she had not been so childishly pleased with herself and the whole proceeding.

"You see, you paid my first month's board in advance and the last three months have come to just two hundred and fifty; for why should I have kept on living in the most expensive room in the house? Well, then, you sent me all that money for theater tickets. Don't you ever sit in the gallery? You can see and hear just as well and it saves a lot, so I had something left from that, and what with the other two hundred and fifty dollars just for clothes, why I've got some of the original five hundred left."

"And this?" asked Nickolas sternly, indicating a separate group of figures.

"That? That is interest."

"On what?"

"You see I couldn't keep all that money in the house, and I didn't know how to get it back to you, so I put



Nickolas tapped himself lightly on the chest. "That man she told you about was me," he said.

it in the bank. That is the interest."

"Oh!" He felt stupid, sitting there uttering monosyllables.

"I can't say just when I'll be able to pay that five hundred back," she said earnestly, "but as I was going to say—"

"You chatter so fast," he said, "that I don't remember what you were going to say."

"Of course, you don't," she said, "if I was *going* to say it."

She laughed at his bad temper exactly as his mother laughed at him and, feeling hopelessly immature and boyish, he looked down and blushed. It made him so angry that he made up his mind that whatever she was going to say he, for one, didn't approve. She spoke:

"I was going to say that I went into one of the Fifth Avenue department stores to— to look at the dresses"—he noticed she avoided the distasteful bargains—"and the saleswoman spoke of the frock I had on. They do sometimes. I told her it was my own idea and that I had made it myself. The head of the department happened to be near and she told her. Well, they've offered me a position to build up the misses' clothing department with *three thousand dollars* a year salary to start!"

This was evidently the climax. He looked at her delighted face, a lily changed to a blush rose.

"You can't live on three thousand dollars a year," he said, with something like a sneer.

She dropped back in her chair and, lifting a very decided little chin, looked away over her shoulder, while Nickolas, under the impression that the electric lighting in the place must have suddenly failed, regarded the envelope, which he held gingerly by one end. He was thinking how exasperating it was in the girl that, when much against his will, she had forced him into supporting her, she didn't let him go on doing it until he felt like stopping.

"I tried to think of everything she might need," he thought, "and now she acts as if I'd been disagreeable and ungenerous about it."

"When do you take up this remunerative position?" he asked with a vicious emphasis.

"Next week," she answered quietly. And then, turning her head apparently for the purpose of examining the view from the other shoulder, she said, "I—I thought you'd be pleased."

Nickolas looked at her sullenly. Her lower lip was drawn against her teeth and he saw that she was breathing heavily.

"Great Scott!" he thought. "I've made her cry."

"Did you really do it to please me?" he quite unexpectedly heard himself inquire gently.

"For that and my own self-respect," she answered in a wavering voice. Then the electric current must have started on again, for, through a sudden suffusion of light, Nickolas found a pair of very wistful eyes looking at him and, in a voice to match, she inquired, "Aren't you pleased?"

"That girl take care of herself!" thought Nickolas. "Why, she's just like a little child." Aloud he said, with elderly kindness, as he tapped the edge of the envelope against his plate, "Well, I had other plans for you."

She was all attention, and under the stimulus of her flattering gaze he unfolded his plan.

"Women," said Nickolas, "are happier married. I don't mean that they are happier married to *any* man. I shouldn't advise a girl to marry any one she didn't care for—er—*tremendously*, but, on the whole, I have concluded it must be quite easy for women to learn to like a man, because sometimes they marry such queer ones."

"I know," said Miss Turnbull, making a moue.

Nickolas nodded. "Now, when I saw you on the street the other Sunday with what I called a very attractive man, it occurred to me that you should marry."

Miss Turnbull did not look as if that

was what she herself had thought all along, as he had expected she would. She only leaned her chin in her hand and surveyed the tea room thoughtfully.

"I hadn't considered that," she said.

"No?" he exclaimed in surprise. "Isn't that unusual?"

"Not when your chief thought has been how to keep body and soul together."

Watching her closely, he was glad to see that the look of bitterness which obscured the light in her eyes soon passed. That he had been able to do for her.

"That man rather likes you, doesn't he?"

"He takes me about a good deal."

"I see." He nodded sagely. "Now, why don't you put off this department-store business, take this money which you seem to have saved"—he found it very difficult to refer to the store and envelope pleasantly—"and, well, I think all you'd have to do is let things take their course."

"Would—would that please you?"

"Very much," said Nickolas firmly. "And if you will give me his name and address I shall, as your natural guardian, investigate him. I do not intend, of course, to have you take a leap in the dark."

"He is a dentist," she told him obediently. "His name is Sanderson and he boards in the house."

"Excellent," said Nickolas. "I have some teeth to be fixed and I'll try him."

On the whole he felt very pleased with the outcome of the interview. True, toward the last, he had felt less that he was basking in warmth and sunlight, but he had got the envelope back into her hands, and he had kept her out of getting work for a while. Those two tributes to his power pleased him more than her acceptance of Sanderson. Any sensible girl would have seen that matrimony was her best course.

The waitress brought the check and he

paid it. Then, leaning back in his chair, he watched Mary Turnbull put on her gloves with exaggerated carefulness. It seemed to him that he had seen her do it before. It puzzled him—this strange sense of familiarity—yet, in what he said, he was explaining it.

"Do you mind telling me how you got two suits for so little money?"

"I've got only one."

"One with fur and one without," he corrected.

"Oh! Why, I just bought the fur and sewed it on," she laughed.

"If you marry the dentist," said Nickolas, "I should not tell him I could make my own clothes. Some men might take advantage of it and it is wiser to hold oneself at a high price."

"I don't think I'm that kind of a girl," she answered. "And, besides, he will be responsible for my whole support. I shall bring him no money."

"Money!" cried Nickolas. "Don't you know that a girl like you is—"

He stopped because he really could not imagine what he had been going to say. Miss Turnbull flushed, and now, being possessed again of the envelope, began in her turn to tap it lightly against her plate.

"One thing troubles me," she said. "You must have worked for this money."

"Worked for it!" said Nickolas artlessly.

"That's the way most people get their money."

"Oh! That was just some I had."

"And you were planning to spend it for something particular!" Her voice was full of tenderness for his sacrifice.

"Don't worry about me," said Nickolas carelessly. "I make a very decent income. I'm a partner in a law firm. Er—perhaps I didn't mention it."

For twenty minutes he told her about that law firm while she sat entranced, and from law they passed on to tene-

ments, and how they might be improved without being actually torn down. Not his tenements, of course, but just tenements. He found she had some very good ideas. He could see she would be worth consulting.

"When had I better see you again?" he asked, for it was evident that they had to leave or be shut up in the tea room.

She thought a moment, and he waited, his eyes pleasantly engaged with the curves of her face.

"I guess you better not, perhaps."

"Not see you!"

She made no answer. She did not even look at him, and Nickolas, being very well brought up, did not press the matter. There was a silence of disappointment on his part and a kind of embarrassment on hers. Just before she rose she said:

"If I marry anybody, how will I be able to pay you what I owe you?"

"Your happiness will be enough," he said.

"I hope I'll be happy." She sighed.

"I wouldn't want you to marry him, if you didn't care for him—er—*tremendously*, you know?"

"Thank you." She rose.

They walked east to her boarding house through what were to Nickolas hitherto undiscovered streets. Mary Turnbull was so constantly calling his attention to things delightfully new. The design of a cornice; the rich color of the bricks in some old house; the gayety which radiated from the bells on a horse's collar. He felt suddenly that he must have missed a great deal out of life and that when he left her the blindness would settle down on him again. Not until they reached her door did he think to ask the thing that had perplexed him.

"How did you recognize me in the tea room?"

"I knew you. I knew you were—the man, when I saw you in the art

gallery that day. And you knew me, too, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"I thought it was awfully kind of you to pretend you didn't."

Again that soft radiance shone upon him, and before he exactly knew it she was gone.

Turning away, he thought less of himself than he had for a long time. Was there any man in the world who was as disagreeable as he? What a mean, contemptible attitude he had had toward her whose every thought had been grateful and honorable toward him!

CHAPTER V.

True to his word, the next day Nickolas consulted Sanderson, and in so doing not only saved money by having his dental work done by a man with more skill in dentistry than knowledge of the social register, but made his first real friend. His appointments were late because of his work, and they often ended in his taking Sanderson out to dinner. Later the dentist invited him to play golf at the New Jersey club to which he belonged, and frequently they took long walks together. From the first of their acquaintance they talked much about "that girl I saw you with one Sunday," and Nickolas was gratified to learn that his friend was deeply enamored. He was pleased, too, to find how frank Miss Turnbull had been about her circumstances.

"She's on a sort of vacation," Sanderson explained. "You see, both her parents were killed in an accident a year or two ago, and I guess the property was in pretty bad shape. She got awfully run down and a friend sent her to New York for the winter. She says she's living on charity."

"I don't think she ought to say that," cried Nickolas.

"Oh, that's just a joke. She is going

to take up some regular work soon and pay it back."

"I suppose she is stronger than when she came?"

"Rather. You ought to have seen her then. Gee, she looked sick! And scared to death!"

"Let's see," murmured Nickolas, "her hair's dark brown, isn't it?"

"No," said Sanderson disgustedly, "it's absolutely black! It isn't coarse and curly like most black hair, either. It's fine and fits close to her head."

"Of course she had her hat on when I saw her. I like women to have a lot of hair, don't you?"

"She's got lots. She asked me the other day if I thought she ought to bob it?"

"You didn't advise her to, Sanderson?"

"Certainly not. I said, 'I think you'll regret it if you do, and I don't think it will look better than the way you wear it now.'"

"Er—how does she wear it now?"

"She puts it all down in her neck somehow, straight back from her face. You know, in dentistry, we study the whole skull. Hers must be about perfect."

"Really?"

"Um-m. Wonderfully straight facial line, you know. Low forehead and broad, flat temples. She's got a peach of a brain box. But it's awfully good of you to listen to me, Quaerts. In the nature of things, it can't interest you very much. You aren't in love with her."

"No, I'm not in love with her. But why don't you marry her, Sanderson?"

"Well," said Sanderson, "how do I know we'd be happy?"

"Happy!" exclaimed Nickolas. "Why, Sanderson, think of coming home from your office and knowing that girl was waiting for you!"

"You ought to get married," laughed Sanderson. "You're enthusiastic."

"I'm not sure I shan't. Anyway, my mother's got the girl picked out for me."

"My mother picked 'em out for me, too, but somehow—— But I tell you, Quaerts, to ask a girl to marry you in New York when you aren't making five thousand a year is risky."

"Money again!" thought Nickolas. "Funny that some people should have so much when the lack of a moderate amount meant curtailment to so many people's happiness and health and life."

"Look here," he said, "you want to find out who your patients are and stick 'em accordingly. I'll send you a few people who, if you treat 'em right, could put a couple of thousand a year on your books and not miss it. People who don't know what it is to work, who never earned a cent in their lives," sneered the junior partner of Van Cuyper, Stuyvesant & Barrings.

"That's awfully kind of you, Quaerts," said the dentist, "but don't you think the responsibility of having a woman to look out for——"

Nickolas cut in:

"There is no greater stimulus to man, Sanderson, than having to keep a girl well and happy."

He spoke with such conviction that he seriously influenced Sanderson's scruples against matrimony. But it was not until he had really brought the dentist to decide that he could safely ask Mary Turnbull to marry him and that he would shortly that Nickolas realized how in providing a stimulus for his friend he had removed his own.

For previously when he stepped into his car to be driven downtown, it was with that brisk feeling that he was setting about a highly necessary business which nobody could do but himself. He felt important in the world, not because he was a Quaerts, as of old, but because he was Nickolas, upon whom devolved the necessity of keeping Mary Turnbull alive and well. Now, it didn't seem to matter whether

he went or not. Everything seemed useless and boresome and at loose ends.

In the depths of his trouble, he turned to Greta. Since she was the girl, whom, as he had told Sanderson, his mother had picked out for him, Greta ought to prove rather more of a stimulus than a girl matrimonially quite ineligible. But she did not prove so. That seven thousand a year for those inadequate clothes formed a barrier which he could not surmount.

He took to walking moodily up Riverside and sitting on the bench from which he had first seen Mary Turnbull. Here he reviewed their two interviews and tortured himself with the thought of how disagreeable he had been about the department store. Why hadn't he been frank and generous and said what he really thought?

"You've got more pluck and honor than a dozen men," he would murmur to himself.

She was continuously on his mind, the more because now there was no one to whom he could talk of her. Finally, in desperation to hear something of her if it was only her name, he called up Sanderson one day from his office.

He cleared his throat several times in order to get a clear, brisk tone.

"Is this you, Sanderson? This is Quaerts. Why, no, nothing's the matter with me. My voice? Oh, the weather's rather enervating, that's all. I wanted to know if you could eat with me to-night?"

He said nothing more for an interval, and then with a hollow "Ha-ha" hung up the phone. Sanderson, it seemed, had an engagement with Mary.

"Make it to-morrow," the dentist said gayly, "and I think I'll have something to tell you." So Nickolas went home and dined opposite his mother.

For several weeks—ever since the meeting in the tea room, had she but known it—Mrs. Quaerts had observed disturbing signs in her son. He had

always been, as boy, youth, and man, of such regularity and dependability that it extended even to his speech. She could always count on him for a certain amount of conversation whenever they met. Now, he sometimes talked garrulously, and sometimes not at all. On several occasions he had answered with great conviction a question which had not been asked. She was worried about him, not so much as to the cause of his abstraction as because—she thought he was growing like his father.

As she looked at him, across the table, she wondered if Greta's coquettish ways were the cause of his evident departure from custom.

"Why don't you take a little trip to Bermuda with me this spring?" she asked. "I don't think you're looking quite fit."

"I'm feeling perfectly fit," he returned a little shortly.

"Still, a little vacation—"

"Vacation! Why, I haven't been in the firm six months yet. Besides I don't want to leave town."

Ah! He didn't wish to leave town. On such slight evidence she reached the desired conclusion that Greta was responsible for this irritability. It was high time, then, that matters were brought to a head. If she did not look out, Nickolas would let some more impulsive young man snatch Greta from under his eyes. She spoke:

"You have seen a good deal of Greta this winter, haven't you?" It was less a question than a statement.

"I've taken her about a good deal."

"Greta seems very much sought after," she said thoughtfully.

"She always has a lot of men around."

"Well," she implied politely, "that's what I said."

"It's not always the same thing," said Nickolas.

"It was in my day."

"Was it?"

He became silent and seemed to be thinking it over. As she had thought, he had not seen the necessity of definite action. It was fortunate she had taken matters in her own hands. A girl like Greta would never know how to handle such an unusual man as Nickolas. She glanced up to find that her son was looking at her curiously.

"Do you mean to say," he asked, "that you married father after you'd seen him at the theater and opera and dinners and dances for a season?"

"Why, certainly. Everybody knew who he was."

"But did you? *Did you?*"

"Don't work yourself into a passion," reproved his mother. "I don't know what you mean."

"I mean didn't you ever talk with him?"

"Of course I did. Just as you talk with Greta."

"Greta," said Nickolas, "talks to me about the opera, the plays in town, the riding, her dogs, what the people she knows are doing—"

"Well—" she interrupted with all the previous implication.

"Well, that's not—not contributive," said Nickolas. She looked at him in amazed silence. He answered the look. "I mean, it doesn't tell me anything about her and it doesn't tell me anything I don't know. She doesn't know any more about anything than I do."

"Certainly not!" murmured Mrs. Quaerts, as one who thanked whatever gods might be for it.

"She doesn't know anything real. She doesn't know anything about life, except society life."

"Well, I should hope not!"

"And, moreover," said Nickolas, as one summing up the items of an accusation, "if Greta pays seven thousand a year for her clothes—she is stung. That means, mother, that she gets cheated."

He arose.

"I've looked into the matter and I know." He walked over and stood before the fireplace.

The servants had been dismissed from the room, and Mrs. Quaerts turned in her chair and looked at her son's back. She had the feeling of having innocently poked a finger through a dam, and finding the whole mill stream loosed on her.

"I am afraid you have been reading some of those women's magazines which tell how to dress on fifteen hundred a year."

Nickolas laughed. "Fifteen hundred!" But he said nothing.

"Those papers," she continued with asperity, "are not concerned with the women of our circle, my dear Nickolas. Imagine walking down Fifth Avenue with a woman who made her own clothes and trimmed her own hats. How would you feel?"

"I would feel," said Nickolas, turning, "that I was walking down the Avenue with a woman. Not with one of the many manifestations of the sex."

"If you must indulge your bad temper like this," remarked his mother coldly, "please do not use scientific terms."

"Pardon me," he said. "I will try to make myself clearer by example. One night during the winter, after I had been to the opera with Greta, I took her down to her car. It was a popular opera and there was a jam of people. She chattered all the way down about Homer and Caruso and all the rest of them, and about the people in the next box and all that; and I said I had never heard Homer in better voice, which was a lie; but she said she hadn't, and I've found it doesn't pay to tell the truth about those things. And I agreed with her also that the people in the next box seemed awfully common, which was another lie. I really thought that they were unaffected, mu-

sic-loving souls who didn't get to the opera very often.

"Well, the upshot of it was that when I got her down to the door—great Scott! It wasn't Greta at all I had, but one of the other girls with her!"

"You're so absent-minded," sighed Mrs. Quaerts.

"You don't get my point," explained her son. "You see, in the crowd, I didn't get a chance to get a good look at her and they were all so cut out of the same piece that, without looking, I couldn't tell the difference. The same silks, laces, and feathers; the same exposure of necks, arms, and legs; the same voices, same chatter; same—the same—well, the *same*. All the same girl served up by different names."

He paused truculently.

Mrs. Quaerts laughed from sheer relief. "My dear boy, of course. That's the advantage. When a man marries in his own set, he knows just what he is getting. He marries with the minimum of risk."

"That's true," said Nickolas, "one doesn't run any risk. You just have to give her what she's used to and she would keep on walking and talking just the same."

He spoke quite gravely and, as she had never had reason to believe Nickolas meant other than he said, this quaint way of expressing the situation troubled her but for a second.

"Exactly," she said, after that second had passed.

"If you will excuse me, mother," he said, "I think I will go upstairs and do a little reading."

But she did not intend to leave matters quite so up in the air as that. As he moved toward the door, she stopped him. This time she made no round-about approach to her point.

"You owe it to your family to marry, and Greta is an eminently suitable girl."

"I dare say," he agreed.

"I don't expect you to appreciate just

how suitable she is," she went on, "because you have no standards to judge by. But you may rely absolutely on my word when I say that she is the girl for you. You have said that she receives a great deal of attention. Now, don't you see that unless you come to some understanding with her you may lose her?"

"But, mother," he replied soothingly, "if I lose Greta I can get one of the others probably."

He smiled blandly at her and, evidently feeling that all had been said that was necessary, went out.

Left alone, Mrs. Quaerts was seized with a mental panic.

"Since he went into business," she said to herself, "he has changed." She said it even in thought, apologetically, as though admitting a flagrant breach in his etiquette. In her own mind she was. Change had never been countenanced by the Quaerts family.

"If only I can get him married," she thought. "A wife would have an influence over him. He might be brought to see things reasonably."

She had her coffee served in the library and took down a soothing volume of *The Spectator*. Every one has a favorite period of existence, and Mrs. Quaerts always felt she would have lived most happily as a contemporary of Addison.

CHAPTER VI.

Sublimely unconscious of the panic into which he had plunged his mother, Nickolas, upstairs in his study, opened a law review across his desk and gave himself up to thought entirely unconnected with the subject matter of the review.

In some restaurant downtown, he reflected, Mary Turnbull was even now leaning across a white-covered table and Sanderson was looking into her soft, shining, understanding eyes. He

never could see why Sanderson had not spoken about that wonderful light in her eyes. A dozen times he had almost given himself away by asking him if he had ever seen another girl with eyes like that. Greta's eyes were bright, but it was because the light struck off from against them. Mary Turnbull's eyes furnished their own illumination; no matter whether she had been in shadow or sun that afternoon in the tea room, the light of her eyes had shone upon him. And it was a light that let one in, not kept one out.

The desire to tell Mary Turnbull everything had been growing in Nickolas during the last few weeks to an almost unbearable intensity. It came upon him in waves. Then it seemed to him he was merely an enormous reservoir of things he wanted to tell her. He wanted to tell her about his tenements and ask her if she thought he was going to work with them the right way; he wanted to tell her about his office; and the people he saw every day; and the things he enjoyed and the things he didn't. He wanted to talk to her about it all.

"Oh, I can't let you go," he said half aloud. "You can't go. You're mine anyway. If it hadn't been for me you'd be dead."

He got up and opened a window, for the room seemed stifling, but the soft spring air brought little relief. He stood looking out blankly into the night until the buzzer of his telephone called him back to his desk.

It was Sanderson. Could Quaerts meet him somewhere along the right-hand side of the Avenue?

Nickolas hesitated before he answered.

"You needn't, if you don't want to," said Sanderson.

"Oh, I want to," answered Nickolas.

He hung up the receiver and rose. He stood still for a moment beside his desk and then, with a conscious effort,

erected his shoulders. As he did it, he remembered how he had seen Mary Turnbull that night by the Drive suddenly lift her shoulders into a position of courage and defiance.

"If I hadn't been drowning in snobbery," he thought, "I'd have known she was a thoroughbred to have such grit. Well, thank Heaven, she's got a better man than I am!" And on the way down the Avenue to meet Sanderson he tried to argue himself into something like a human mood along this humiliating vein.

"Mary Turnbull," he argued, "would never be happy with me. A girl wants to marry a real man who has had some experience in life and got some understanding of it. Not a half-developed specimen like me! Girls want to marry men they can look up to and respect and that know more than they do—men like Sanderson. Sanderson's been on his own since he was a boy; Sanderson's got some grasp on the values of life; Sanderson—"

"Hullo," said Sanderson, as he sidestepped his abstracted friend, "why don't you look where you're going?"

"Funny I didn't see you," said Nickolas, "I—I was thinking about you."

He turned about beside the dentist, who had just finished a cigarette, but who took another and offered his case to Nickolas. Together they walked up the Avenue, both smoking rather nervously. Nickolas said nothing. He did not know what to say. They had reached the wall of the Park before Sanderson spoke. Then he said deliberately:

"Well, she won't have me."

If he had said he had changed his mind, Nickolas would have thought him verging on idiocy, but he would have better believed what he heard. But that she—

"But she said she—" He stopped in time. "Are you sure?" he asked impressively.

"Very sure," said Sanderson with a little laugh.

"But you're so suitable," murmured Nickolas. "You're so suitable, Sanderson!"

The dentist said nothing and they walked on. Nickolas looked at him sideways. Sanderson was tall and dark and handsome, all that he admired and was not himself. It was impossible that she didn't adore him! And he had so much experience! There must be a misunderstanding.

"She let you think she cared for you?" he said.

"She thought she did, it seemed."

"Well?"

"Well—when it came to the showdown— Oh, it seems there is another man."

"Another man!"

Nickolas repeated the words as in a trance. She had said nothing to him of another man. She had led him to believe, and from Sanderson's reports he had been convinced, that she meant to marry the dentist. And behind all that show of childlike obedience to his wishes, there had been another man. All the inherited male traditions of woman's inveterate duplicity sprang up full grown within him. She had deceived him. If he had felt before that the bottom had dropped out of things, now he only wished he might drop after it. He would never trust another woman. And this miserably illuminating experience he again summed up. "Another man!"

"I shouldn't have said man," said the dentist, in a bitter tone that Nickolas found distinctly soothing and congenial. "I should have said paragon, saint, angel, tin-god-on-wheels—"

"Does he live in the boarding house?" faltered Nickolas.

"No."

"Did you ever see him?"

"No, nor any one else."

Nickolas came up like a flower in the

sun. "You mean," he said, "that there really isn't another man? She just didn't care for you—er—*tremendously*, and so she just said—"

"No, I don't," said Sanderson irritably. "I mean there never was that kind of man. *Absolutely* broad-minded, *perfectly* generous, *marvelously* thoughtful—" He paused for adjectives.

"Is he really?" asked Nickolas earnestly.

Sanderson vouchsafed no reply to such credulity. He resumed his rival's catalogue of virtues in a tone of mocking adoration: "He's a very successful business man, but he doesn't use his money for his own pleasures only. He helps other people to be successful, too."

"Then, after all, he must be a good sort, Sanderson," argued Nickolas justly.

The dentist only laughed. "Oh, and I forgot! He is only about as strong as a giant and he never gets excited or loses his head."

"Phew!" whistled Nickolas. "I'd like to be like that."

"But what makes him greatest," went on Sanderson sarcastically, "is his marvelous, wonderful, almost angelic gift of understanding. No matter how foolish or cowardly a person may be, this little saint knows all about it and forgives 'em."

Nickolas sighed. "A man like that must have had a lot of experience."

"Maybe," said Sanderson, "but I think he sounds like a pipe dream."

They were silent while the dentist continued to chew over his disappointment and Nickolas pondered whether if, by some happy chance, some one came into his life in need of forgiveness, he would know and understand enough to forgive him. He wondered if Sanderson would forgive Mary Turnbull. After all, you couldn't blame her for loving a man like that.

And this made him wish to ease Sanderson's possible wrath against her.

"But, Sanderson," he said, laying a hand on his arm, "I think a man like that would put almost anybody out with a girl. Now, you're a mighty fine sort, I think, but a man such as she described—"

"Hell!" cried the dentist, shaking off his hand. "She only *thinks* he is like that. That's not what has put me out of the running."

"No?" inquired Nickolas in surprise. This seemed to him rather conceited of Sanderson.

"No. What queers me is the romance. It seems he fished her out of the Hudson once. Saved her life. What can you do against that?"

As Nickolas made no answer, only quickened his pace somewhat, Sanderson demanded again, "What can I do against that, I say?"

"Where is she?" asked Nickolas.

"At the house."

"I think I'll go down."

"Thanks, but you can't do anything, really."

Yet in spite of the warning, Nickolas stepped to the curb and hailed an approaching taxi.

"One moment," he said. "Do you think she really cares for that man?"

"I think," said the dentist, suddenly grave, "that she cares for him *tremendously*."

The taxi came to a stop. Seeing that Sanderson was about to follow him, Nickolas turned on the step and obstructed the way. At the same time it occurred to him that Sanderson might want an explanation. He tapped himself lightly on the chest.

"That man she told you about was me," he said.

"Conceited ass!" growled Sanderson, glowering after the tail light of the disappearing car.



He was driving home
when Mrs. Breen
hailed him.

Shaw to the Rescue

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "Her Own Price," "The Precious Hour," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

The Irish dramatist was certainly studying the genus Cicely when he gave out his ideas about woman being the pursuer and pretty likely to get what she pursued.

GENERAL manager of the Barnard Implement Company at thirty was pretty good, Stephen Branch admitted, and he felt quite happy about it, even though the thought of Kaye Fentor with that little pang of regret came, too, as it always did when anything like this happened to him. He had been in love with Kaye a long time, and felt reasonably sure he would never love any one else, even if he had not seen her for a long time and might possibly never see her again.

He was not moping about it, how-

ever, and did not look at all a victim of unrequited love, as he drove homeward in his good-looking car. A pleasant and prosperous town was Midvale, and Stephen felt just now fairly well content with his lot. Sometimes, of course, he, too, had dreamed dreams of great cities and power and deeds of high import, but, after all, this was pretty good.

Yes, the middle-aged, plump lady with the parasol was surely trying to attract his attention, smiling, waving her hand.

"How do you do, Mr. Stephen Branch? Don't you know me?"

"Why, it's Mrs. Breen!" He sprang out of the car and shook her hand cordially. "I hardly knew you."

"Nor I you. You've changed a bit, Stephen." Her merry little eyes were curious.

"For the better, I hope."

"Yes," she said candidly. "Well, it seems good to be back in Midvale. Did you know we were moving back?"

"We?" His heart jumped.

Kaye and I. Everybody's surprised."

"I don't wonder. I should think our town a trifle dull for Miss Kaye."

"Well, you would think so. She's so restless, too. She sent me on ahead to take the Carter place. We heard it was to let. Kaye will be along next week."

"Were you going there now?" Stephen asked. "Let me run you over."

"If it won't be out of your way. I was just going to take the street car." She was glad of the invitation, and continued to chat volubly of Kaye and Kaye's ways and plans as they rode along. Mrs. Breen was some sort of distant connection of Kaye's. She had been a poor widow doing a little sewing to "help out" when Kaye became her aunt Kenia's heir to what Midvale considered a large fortune. Kaye had, to Midvale's chagrin, immediately deserted the town, charitably taking cousin Dora Breen with her.

Mrs. Breen had been a neighbor of Stephen's grandparents, with whom he made his home, and it was so she knew Stephen and not through his slight acquaintance with Kaye Fentor, for in spite of the emotion it had roused, that acquaintance really had been slight. The studious and hard-working Stephen was outside the younger, schoolgirl circle of Kaye, yet probably he would have bridged that had he not been bound by a tie, a delicate, chivalrous

tie—his engagement to Cicely Holmes. All that was in the back of his mind now as he listened to Mrs. Breen's good-natured chatter. Then again she gave him a curious look.

"So you're not married, Stephen, after all?"

"No." His eyes were on the road.

"Well, I always wondered at that, anyway," she declared. "Never thought you and Cicely were a mite suited. Is it so she married a rich man from Honolulu?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Breen drew a long breath and let it out in a humorous sigh. "Why can't you satisfy an old woman's curiosity with a few details, Stevie? And I wouldn't ask it, if I thought your heart was broken. It wasn't, was it?"

He returned her smile. "Well, Cicely discovered I wasn't necessary to her happiness and this Wilford was. Could I do anything?"

"You couldn't, Stevie." Her inflection was complimentary. "And she was a selfish little beast, if I do say it, as shouldn't."

"Oh, no," said Stephen. But he had wondered about Cicely since then, and wondered at his own simplicity. Cicely, an orphan like himself, had been taken in by his grandmother entirely out of the kindness of her heart, and the two had been brought up together. Cicely, a frail, charming child, had grown up, retaining that fragility as an unsuspected but powerful weapon, and from childhood she had hung herself around Stephen's neck with a tyranny so subtle he would have felt a murderer had he tried to loosen his grasp. The old folks thought Cicely's affection for Stephen dear, her dependence on him sweetly pathetic, and Stephen himself, simple, loyal, generous, entirely failed to perceive he was in danger of playing rock all his life to this parasitic little barnacle! While they were still children, she began to take it for granted that

they would be married some day. The elders encouraged the idea, and, when she was seventeen and he eighteen, he found himself putting a ring on her finger with no very clear idea of how he came to be doing it. So they were engaged and it was all settled.

A few years passed and then—he met Kaye Fentor. She had been standing at Mrs. Breen's gate, and that lady had introduced him. Kaye was just going, and they had walked on down the street together. It was as if he really beheld a *woman* for the first time! It had not occurred to him that women were like *this*—this adorable being whose presence made a singing in his heart, made him some way feel at once a shouting young god and a dumb, wistful slave. It came to him suddenly what the poets were writing about:

Your eyes are a black lake
Where the moon always shines,
Her white fires make
Sound in the close, black pines.

Deep in those waters old
One finds fantastic things,
Strange cups, and gold
Crowns of forgotten kings.

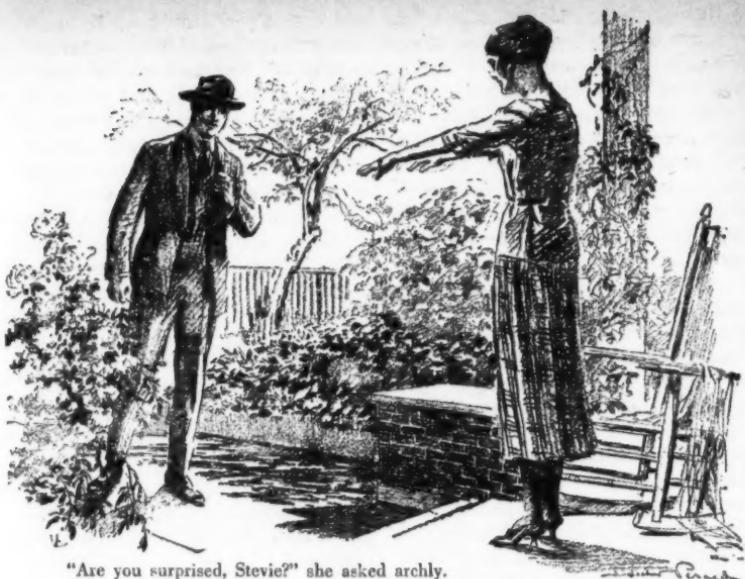
Kaye's eyes were not black, but for him there was in them all the glamour and mystery, hint of ancient and eternal riddles, which young love is always reading into *her* eyes. She was gay and friendly, not coquettish. He put her on the street car and stood back with his hat off as it carried her away.

Poor Steve had fallen, as his kind is apt to do, suddenly and hard. They met again at a dance, and Kaye stood out to him from the blur of chorus as the star stands out upon whom one has fixed opera glasses. And Steve was like a man blindfolded and just relieved of the bandage. Things were amazingly clear. He understood he was in love with Kaye, also, at last, the significance of his engagement to Cicely. It would not be true to say the idea of

escape did not occur to him, but the means certainly did not. Then, as he argued and struggled with himself, Cicely fell ill, and it was Stevie this and that, and here and there, whom should she want other than her devoted Stephen? Being himself, what could he do except dance attendance? And while he danced, Kaye went out of his life, never guessing what had been in his heart, leaving him only the heritage of a dream.

After a good while grandfather suggested that maybe Steve'd better ask Cicely to set the day. Cissie had seemed a bit restless lately; Steve shouldn't get wrapped up too completely in business. Steve shrugged—what did anything matter?—and asked Cicely if she cared to say when the event should be. He was surprised that she seemed startled, gave him one of those speculative looks he was beginning to half understand, and put him off. Shortly after he discovered the little matter of Edgar Wilford, a rich, handsome, middle-aged gentleman from Honolulu, who had met Cicely somewhere—Steve could not imagine where—and had been “rushing” her systematically. Sparing details, a month later she eloped with Wilford, leaving Stephen's modest ring inclosed with a note in which she asked him to release her, please, as she was marrying Edgar Wilford. Very naive was Cicely. Poor, jilted Stephen was the object of much sympathy, under which he managed to bear up. He was a trifle shocked, truly, and perhaps a little bitterly amused. How satirical the little gods are sometimes!

There was nothing he could do about Kaye now. She had never returned to Midvale, and Midvale merely understood the heiress was sojourning in New York and London and Paris and such places. She had probably quite forgotten ever having met a young man called Stephen Branch in the remote burg of Midvale, so he could hardly



"Are you surprised, Stevie?" she asked archly.

advertise in metropolitan dailies that he would like to communicate with Miss Kenia Fentor, generally called "Kaye."

"Of course, I was surprised when she decided on Midvale," Mrs. Breen was saying. "But then she's surprised me more than once. About not marrying, for instance. A girl like that!"

"It is surprising," said Stephen.

"I've asked her why. And what do you think she says, jokingly, of course, but she meant it, too—that she was the victim of unrequited love!"

"Can't imagine that," said Stephen.

"Now can you? I hope you'll be nice to her, Stevie, and get her out of that notion."

"I should like to be very nice to her, if she'd let me."

"Oh, I think she will. Here we are. Thank you for bringing me. And come to see us soon, won't you?"

So he called as soon as seemed permissible after Kaye's arrival. He had been all eagerness until he sat in the

rejuvenated living room of the Carter place, all tender curiosity to see if she were changed, yet, as he waited, a depression seized him. It was not with her, as with him, the journey's end of lovers' meeting. He would be only a half-forgotten acquaintance to her, and then there might even be for him—disillusion. She came in.

"This is kind of you! I hoped Midvale would seem like home, but it hasn't at all. Everything's changed. But seeing you does seem like old times."

"Thank you. I was afraid you might not even remember I was a part of those old times."

"Oh, yes, I remember that."

They sat down and spoke with a little effort of the few mutual acquaintances of those old times. He need not have been afraid of awakening! Every charm she had ever had for him was enhanced by the glamour of her experience since. He felt her invested with the mystery, the gloss that the worldling has for the stay-at-home. He had

been just here in this prosaic town, working, dreaming, working, while she had sailed all the seas and tried the gayety of all the wise old cities, and seen all the pictures and plays and strange streets and sunsets and storms, and he thought he saw in her eyes the shadows of many emotions he fancied might be born of exotic knowledge and perhaps odd, delicate adventures with the great, the eccentric—the romantic. She was not all the girl he had been dreaming of, a girl he had not known well enough to have much idea of what she really was. He had not thought about that, whether she was good and wise, he had only felt "I love you." It was like being enamored of a photograph and beholding now the real woman a thousand times warmer and dearer and more alluring. No, he need not have been afraid of disillusion.

"I suppose the penalty of doing what you wish," she was saying, "is that you can no longer think of anything you wish to do, or anywhere you wish to go. I used to think of all the world away from Midvale, and yet, in the end, I seemed to find no place I wanted to go—much. So I came back to Midvale."

He saw that what Mrs. Breen had said was true. Kaye had missed the thing she wanted most. Yes, in the face of this fortunate young woman there was a tiny wistfulness, a tiny weariness; behind the impenetrable wall at which you looked in her merry eyes there was—a secret.

"Poor old Midvale," he said, "wouldn't have much to offer, it would seem, to you."

She made a little gesture. "Well, I thought I'd like to see if it had. Perhaps the world hasn't any more, really, to offer than old Midvale. Or else it has cruelly withheld it from me."

Yes, he knew what she meant. Queer she should be, like him, suffering from the same deprivation of a love for which

there was, or had been, no substitute. An impulse seized him to throw himself at her feet and tell her how piercingly he understood, and why. If they had been in Paris or London or Venice or even San Francisco, perhaps he would have done so with eloquence and passion, but in Midvale—

Mrs. Breen had asked him to be nice to Kaye, to distract her mind from the pain in her heart was the idea evidently. He'd try, and who knows! If she would only let him try. He wondered who it was, some foreign prince, some poetic married man, like—er—Jane Eyre? Whoever he was, he wasn't *here*, so let humble Stephen have *his* chance. He would show her what devotion was! His fine eyes sought hers eagerly, and though, of course, she could not guess, to his surprise and pleasure, color rose in her cheeks.

His campaign, Stephen decided, must be delicate, subtle. She might resent any open advance as implying doubt of her constancy. He must not forget she thought her heart irrevocably another's. He, Stephen, must play just the devoted friend until some day, when he had shown her what ardor and what tenderness and what understanding he could bring to the lady of his heart, she, too, might sigh something like: "Why don't you speak for yourself?"

So he set himself the pleasant task of being good friend to one whom he regarded not so much as a world-weary woman as a little girl who has tired of toys. He gave freely, and asked nothing, not a kiss nor a pressure of hands, nor any delving in sentimental philosophy, but always doing what she wanted done, always ready when she lifted a finger for him. All went well, they became very good friends.

And then—and then! Stephen, in good spirits, went home one evening—he still lived with the old folks—went home to see a familiar figure rocking in

that little old rocker on the front veranda. He stared, could not believe his eyes, looked again. Yes, it was certainly *Cicely*!

She rose, and stood smiling. "Are you surprised, Stevie?" she asked archly, holding out both hands. Looking a little blank and because there was nothing else to do, he took them, was rewarded by a gentle pressure.

"Do say you're glad to see me," she urged softly.

"Where on earth did you come from?" he demanded. He would have liked to add, "And why?"

Her head drooped, long lashes hid her eyes. He remembered so well that old way of looking pitiful. "I should have written grandma, I know," she murmured. "I intended to, but there were so many things. Edgar died last year."

"Well—I—too bad," he said awkwardly.

Then she lifted her eyes to his in that old pleading way. "You—you've forgiven me, Stephen, haven't you?"

Not just the time to bring that up, he thought. "Oh, don't mention that," he said brusquely, and went on into the house, understanding perfectly and exasperatedly that she already was misinterpreting his attitude.

Thus, quite as if it were a matter of course, Cicely settled herself in her old home. The "old folks" had received her cordially, although her elopement had deeply wounded them, and they had never forgiven her for jilting Stephen. If he had not been annoyed, Steve would have been amused at the effrontery of it. She had come back apparently to play wealthy young widow with Midvale as audience, and she was not in the habit of considering any feelings except her own.

"Oh, Stevie, *would* you run me over to Stella Barber's? I'm so anxious to see her! It won't take long. I'll have

my own car soon and then I won't bother you."

It was on his tongue to say: "I shall do nothing of the sort, my dear Cicely." But why be boorish, why give the absurd matter any importance? He would not be childish, silly, and he was not to see Kaye that night anyway.

Stella Barber gushed. "Oh, my dear, I'm so surprised, and just tickled to death! Have you come back to *stay*, to *live*?"

Cicely looked demure. "Yes, I think so."

"Oh, we must get all the old crowd together and have an evening here! This next week. How about Thursday?"

"How sweet of you, dear!" Cicely was highly pleased.

"You can come Thursday, can you, Stephen? Or we'll set a night you *can* come!"

There they had him! Again he could not be childish and say, "I won't come to your old party any night." But he could have shaken Stella. When he called on Kaye he thought she looked at him just a little quizzically. They talked as usual, read aloud a little, Kaye sang a song or two in her slight, sweet contralto, their usual program, but in Kaye he felt something different, an undertone in what she said, in the way she looked at him, something indefinable but disconcerting.

The next time he saw her it was still there.

Thursday he took Cicely to Stella's as cheerfully as he could, and was bored by these people who seemed to think it so natural for him to be escorting Cicely. On the way home she said, "Won't you help me select my car, Stevie? I wish you'd come with me to look at that Regal."

"I'm pretty busy," he began.

"But if I'm at the salesroom at five sharp, couldn't you just drop in? It wouldn't take a minute."

"Oh, I guess I could do that." He did so, and just as Cicely was taking his arm to lead him in, Kaye passed in her runabout, saw him, gave him a little nod, as he eagerly raised his hat.

Drat Cicely! How long was she going to be hanging about, anyway! Buying a car, not saying a word about finding other lodgings, acting like a prodigal daughter entirely sure of her welcome. What could he do? Oh, well, what difference did it make? He bought red roses and carried them to Kaye.

She said, "So Mrs. Wilford's back?"

"Yes."

"Returned as the irresistible widow, I hear."

"As a widow, yes." He didn't know why he hated talking about her. Kaye laughed, changed the subject.

Several weeks passed, and Stephen continued to wait as patiently and politely as possible for Cicely to announce the end of her visit. In spite of himself he was always taking her here, seeing that she got home from there, doing this or that little errand for her. But it was not until he phoned to Kaye and found that she had left town without mentioning to him she was going that he realized how much less he had been seeing her of late. She had been "out" when he called, was going to be busy when he spoke of futures, and, when he did see her, there was still in her eyes and manner that tiny difference—disconcerting.

He was depressed. He had deceived himself. He had not after all proved diverting. No. She was still thinking

A machine stopped in front of the house and honked a summons, "Hello," called Kaye.

of the other. He was driving home just as he had been that other evening, when Mrs. Breen hailed him, and, as before, he offered to take her to her destination. Yes, Kaye had gone up to the lake for a few days. She was getting restless again, seemed like. They'd probably be moving back to New York or some place, first thing a person knew. Mrs. Breen sighed, then looked at Stephen with interest. "Well, I suppose we'll be hearing news from you shortly."

"News? I don't know of any."

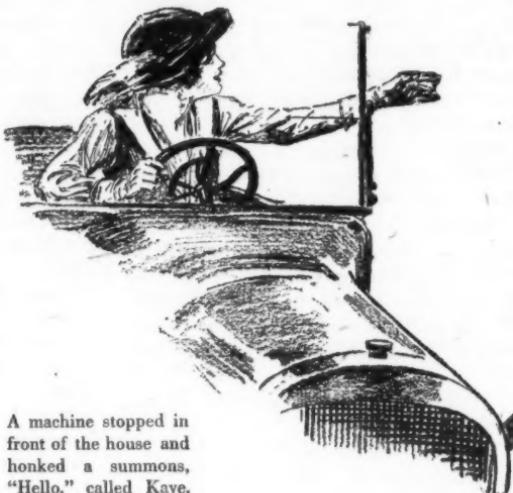
She laughed. "Forgive me, my dear boy, I didn't mean to pry. But you know people are always surmising."

"Just what do you mean?"

"Oh, why—about Cicely, of course."

"What about Cicely?" His tone was peremptory.

"Don't be angry, Stevie. It's simply





"Why, Kaye! I thought you were up at the lake!"

that everybody expects your engagement to be announced any day."

"Now why should they expect it?"

"Oh, bygones and appearances." She began to talk of other things, and he saw she was not taking his brusqueness for denial, but just for a disinclination to discuss so delicate a matter.

He set Mrs. Breen down at her own gate, and drove home in a study of the deepest brown shade. People thought Cicely had returned to repair the damage of her early jilting. People thought he had remained true to his youthful love and was now rewarded. She was at his home, he had been about with her. And he understood something else—*Cicely had the very same idea!* He felt a chill. Cicely was sly. What chance had a mere man with Cicely? He knew from experience.

And Kaye! That something differ-

ent in her was explained, too. For a second time Cicely was going to lose him Kaye, if he were not careful.

He would ask Kaye if he had any chance with her; he would let her know exactly how he stood. And he would let Cicely and the world know how he stood with her. And if Kaye would not have him, he would shake the dust of Midvale from his unhappy feet. He went down to dinner, declined sweetly, but firmly, to take Cicely over to Stella's just for five minutes, and consulted a time-table. No train to the lake before eight-thirty. So there was the evening to put in. He got his hat to go downtown.

On the veranda sat Cicely, looking small and lonely and wistful, an attitude that was like a little steel trap set for the protective instinct of good-natured males. If Stephen had not been caught once in it, he would not have half discerned its real nature now, he would have succumbed to the smallness and wistfulness which made a fellow feel a big brute not to do what he could to make this lonely little girl happy. Dangerous? Well! She began to talk to him, to hold him there in that way of hers that made a short answer seem like kicking a sick kitten. In spite of himself, he lingered, he *had* to linger.

A machine stopped in front of the house and honked a summons. It looked like Kaye's car! He ran down the walk.

"Hello," called Kaye.

"Why, Kaye! I thought you were up at the lake!"

"I came down," she smiled, looking in his eyes with a peculiar intentness. "Want to take a ride?"

"Do I?" He climbed in beside her.

"Is that Cicely on the porch?" she asked, letting in the clutch.

"Yes." He waved his hand carelessly toward her dim figure.

"Awfully rude, isn't it?" said Kaye. "Not speaking to her, carrying you off like this."

"I don't care how rude it is," he said ecstatically.

"I did intend to stay out the week at the lake," she explained. "I wanted to think something out. I decided to ask your advice. We're good friends, aren't we, Stephen?"

"The best in the world, I hope. Do let me help, if I can."

"This," she hesitated, "is rather a delicate subject." And then she went on with a rush. "What would you do, Stephen, if you'd always cared for some one, and some one else came between you?"

His spirits, which had gone up with a bound, fell with a dull thud. She was still agonizing over that old affair! He had been a fool to hope even so little.

"A woman," she went bitterly, "is supposed to stand and wait and not lift a finger. Oh, I've been thinking and thinking—"

"Kaye," Stephen said slowly, "I could ask your advice in a very similar matter. Did it never occur to you that I was in the same boat?"

"What sort of boat do you mean?"

"Caring for some one who cares for some one else. Mrs. Breen told me about—you."

"Oh, did she?"

"And, Kaye, didn't you ever realize that it was that way with me and you? I—I've always loved you, Kaye. But

—but there was Cicely. I wish I could make you understand about that. It was something I'd grown into. And I couldn't get out. When I did you were gone, and when you came back I tried to win against that other. Haven't you understood?"

A queer little sound escaped her. They were well out of town by now, and she brought the car to a stop by the roadside. "Oh, sometimes I half thought—you—but you were so careful—"

"I knew I must be careful," he said gloomily, "not to hurry or frighten you."

Again she made that little sound; it seemed half laugh, half sob. "And then Cicely came home, and you found that you were not sure after all—"

"Nothing of the sort!" he cried.

"Well, you were very attentive, going about with her."

"You don't know Cicely," he declared grimly. "Good heavens! Can't I ever get away from Cicely?"

"Didn't I just drive up and take you from under her nose?" Kaye demanded triumphantly.

"You did, darling. And I was going up to the lake to see if there was any chance for me. If there isn't, Kaye—"

"But there is, dear," said Kaye.

"And the other," he said blissfully after a while. "You've quite forgotten?"

Kaye giggled. "Oh, yes, the other. I did say that to Mrs. Breen. But—it was always *you*, Stephen!"

It was quite some time after before he thought to ask, "How did you happen to come down to-night, dear?"

Her smile was cryptic. "Oh, I had the queerest feeling that you were in danger." She did not add that she had been reading Shaw.



The Vision of Sally Long

By Arthur Crabb

Author of "David's Story," "The Lady in Black," etc.



Sally Long started out in life with a determination to "see the world—and eat it alive." But along came Duty, and another ambition replaced this desire. Sally is one of the most interesting characters we have met recently.

At eight o'clock one June morning Hamilton Ware walked down the steps of his father's house. Even then it was warm, and Ware foresaw that the day would be very hot. He went back into the house, put a soft shirt, a change of underwear, and things for the night into a bag. He called to his mother, "I may not come back tonight. I may go to see the Grays in Charlesford." He looked at a front tire and mused, "Keep going as long as you can, old top; you've had a long life and a hard one." He made sure that he had two spare tires, and then drove off, across country, till he came to the broad highway which runs south along the river; it was brick or concrete much of the way and carried an almost solid stream of trucks. There was no wind; smoke and gases from the stacks close by settled down on it, making breathing unpleasant; the glaring sun, reflected from the gray concrete and red brick of the roadway and the buildings along it, made the heat still more intense.

Hamilton stopped twice at offices along the way to talk with men he knew. Finally, he came to a great chemical-manufacturing plant, and there he spent three hours close to white-hot kilns and furnaces, breathing dust and fumes. At three o'clock his work was done, and he drove back five miles along the way he had come. He had lunch, and at four o'clock stepped into his car.

"Home through the country for me, whether the Grays want me or not," he thought. His friends lived westward some twenty miles; they were pleasant people, they had a swimming pool, and he was always welcome. He started west, over a road he knew well. But within ten minutes he came face to face with an impassable road and two laconic fingers, each inscribed "Detour." He turned north without hesitation, sure that another road westward would appear soon. He drove for three miles before he came to a road which looked inviting. Another finger, this time a signpost pointing westward, said that Beaver Valley lay three miles in that direction. Ware consulted his map and, finding Beaver Valley, saw that it lay between him and Charlesford and the swimming pool.

"We'll try Beaver Valley," he said, speaking to his car as to a companion.

For a mile the road was smooth, then followed a mile of broken stone lying as it had been thrown except for two ruts pounded out by wheels; then came a mile of better road uphill; and at the crest Ware stopped. Beaver Valley lay before him.

"What a place for a house!" he exclaimed aloud. The view was very beautiful. The hills beyond were low, and beyond them rose other hills, rolling miles and miles toward the west. He saw only two houses and one barn;

cultivated fields took the curve of the hills, great clusters of green-black trees framed them, a brook flowed below him; above him great, white, billowy clouds floated in the blue sky, here and there bits of hot gray haze hung over the valley, giving the picture depth.

He started downward and immediately the road became almost a precipice, became more like the bed of a mountain stream than a road. It was a jumble of rocks and so steep that the car paid scant attention to its brakes. Wade stopped the engine and went into second gear, then into low, letting the engine do what braking it could. He crept on, foot by foot, evading great boulders and keeping an eye on the roadside in case things got beyond control. But he came to the bottom safely and, gliding out on a smooth, level space, stopped just before he reached a bridge which crossed the brook which he had seen from above.

"Some road," he muttered, "and fine for the car!" He got out and confirmed his suspicion that the old front tire was flat. "I don't blame you, friend," he thought, "you died nobly."

He took off his coat and started to change the shoe. He had the old one off when he heard a voice behind him:

"Hot work, isn't it?"

He turned and saw a woman leaning against the fence at the roadside. He paid little attention to her as he answered:

"Decidedly."

The perspiration was rolling off his face, his shirt was soaking wet. He fitted on the new shoe.

"What brought you here?" the woman asked.

"Some road, isn't it?" Ware said, indicating the hill behind him. "Are there any more like it farther on?"

"No, they're not bad farther on."

The voice made Ware turn quickly.

"Bless my soul, Sally Long!" he exclaimed.

The woman laughed. "How's Hamilton Ware?" she asked.

"Finely," he said. "Of all places in the world to find you!"

The woman laughed again. "Oh, I don't know. Finish your job and come and talk with me. Move the car out of the way. Another foolish one might come along; one does, every now and then."

Fourteen years before, Hamilton Ware had been graduated from college. Two years later he was teaching chemistry in a coeducational college in a city two hundred miles up-State from Alden. Sarah Long went there as a freshman the same year that he went there to teach chemistry. It was a small college, its standards were not high, its social life was simple; most of its students came badly prepared and they came from no high social level; they were comparatively poor and they came largely to learn enough to teach. Ware, accustomed to life in Alden and in a great university, thought that, by and large, they were a pretty hopeless lot.

Every one knew every one else, and he had met Sarah promptly. His first impression was that Sarah was the saddest of the sad lot. She dressed atrociously; she was certainly not beautiful, although her figure would not have been bad if she had given it half a chance; her hair could not have been arranged more unbecomingly; she knew less than nothing of the ways of polite society; she was a crude, raw product of a world unknown to Hamilton Ware.

Before long he heard her story, which was that she was ambitious, though her ambition was uncertain; teaching appeared to be nearer it than anything. She had two thousand dollars, a legacy, for her four years' course. It was not enough, a fact which worried her, and she was looking for work to help out.

Ware thought little about her until the next year when she came into one

of his classes and sat before him, close to the platform. Even then he thought little of her until, slowly, he came under the spell of her eyes. She moved very little in her chair, but sat watching him all during the hour except when it was necessary for her to take notes. She seemed unconscious of the fixity of her eyes; he was very sure that she was not trying either to annoy him or to attract him. He saw her in the laboratory and, curiously, found her very pleasant. Eventually he woke up to the fact that he was interested in her. There was a minor fascination about her. She had changed during the year, subtly but surely. She had taken on some sort of grace; her clothes, though still possessing little style, had a peculiarly attractive taste about them; her hair had become something of an ornament. But her minor fascination lay in none of those things, nor even in her eyes.

She was bright, she stood well out among the leaders in the class. Ware found her interesting and found himself drawn to her. He heard some one say that all the men were crazy about her, and laughed because he was in that category. He woke up and his interest in Sarah Long was thereafter, for a year, impersonal.

Sarah worked as a clerk in a resort hotel during her second summer vacation. It happened to be a pretty good hotel and she learned a lot about the manners and customs of ladies. By Christmas of her third year Ware was sure that gold could be made from base metal. Sarah made her own clothes and was the best-dressed girl in college. The charms of her exquisite figure blossomed forth; she was wonderfully graceful; her hair was a glorious crown. Her voice was low and soft, her inflection and her speech would have become the finest of ladies. The crude, raw, unrefined girl had perceived, had imitated, had chosen wisely,

had practiced, until she had all the superficial qualities of a most attractive lady.

Ware wondered whether the imitation was skin-deep, and discovered quickly that it was not. She stood head and shoulders above her classmates, she was their unquestioned leader in everything in which she took part, she stood out from them as the moon outshines the stars. She had become interested in English and took all the courses in it which she could cram into her schedule. She discovered that she loved writing and had a knack for it; she was on the staff of the college paper, but she found that field too limited and went at story-writing and sold some tales. She got twenty-five or fifty dollars for them, thus solving the money question. She went in for theatricals and made an enormous hit in the small collegiate circle.

Who she was or where she came from, Hamilton Ware did not know nor could he discover. He asked her, later on, and she told him, rather indefinitely, that she came straight from the soil, and he wondered how rough, uneducated parents could have produced such a girl.

Remarkable as her intellectual and æsthetic development was, more remarkable still was the development of the purely elemental woman. In her second year it had been said that the men were crazy about her; before her third year was over men—not only of the college but many from the city—older men, were completely under her spell.

It was not entirely her intellect nor her wit that did it. Her eyes had the devil in them, her voice hypnotized, her smile conquered. There was passion in her, a passion which bred passion in men.

There are women like that; history tells of some of them; they have changed the map of the world. But Sarah's college and its town were small

and provincial and Sarah knew it. Ambition had laid its iron hand on her. She had a vision; there was a world outside awaiting her coming.

She spent her third summer vacation with a publishing house in New York and met a Miss Julia Kern, of a literary agency, whose idea of prices for stories was a bit more than fifty dollars. Either through pure kindness of heart or because she recognized indications of genius in the girl, Miss Kern took Sarah Long under her personal and official wings. The result was such education, literary and social, as Sarah could never have obtained through her college; and Julia Kern did not dampen Sarah's enthusiasm, but added fire to it.

Sarah went back to college a lady beyond question, her fascination for men increased almost unbelievably. The college had never before harbored such a woman as she and the college bowed down and worshiped her. She had, by then, all the arts and graces of a clever, experienced woman of the world; she was entirely sure of herself, her manner was at once dignified and alluring, she dressed with exquisite taste, she had become almost beautiful, her face had in it her character, her intellect, and her fascination.

Ware loved her, and found himself struggling among a mob of boys and town men. There was something undignified in the competition. A professor had no business making love to an undergraduate, or trying to. His position was not an easy one, but in a way she made it easier for him, for she had long before singled him out to be her especial friend. Perhaps it was because her instinct told her that he was of the world which she wanted for her world, perhaps she recognized in him generations of fine breeding, perhaps it was his own personality which drew her to him.

He knew well enough that she did

not love him. So sure of it was he that he never proposed marriage to her. He watched for a sign of love, even of sentiment, and saw not one. He asked her if she wanted to marry, if she had thought of marriage, and she answered without a blush that she wanted children more than anything in the world, but not yet.

When her fourth year was finished and Sarah was ready to go out into the world which was waiting for her, she spoke a kind word to Ware.

"You've been awfully good to me," she said. "You've done lots more for me in all sorts of ways, in big ways, than any one here. I appreciate it more than I can ever tell you."

Hamilton insisted that he had done nothing.

"I'm going out into the world!" she cried. "I'm going to see life and I'm going to pay my own way. I'm going to make my mark, I'm going to be famous, but I'll never forget you and all you've done for me. Promise you won't forget me, promise to love me a little, always, as though I were your sister."

"I promise," he said, and she laughed and ran away from him.

He let her go. There was nothing else for him to do. She could never love a man like him and he could not ask her to love him, for love meant marriage and, on his salary, he could not support Sally Long.

She went out into the world and he heard that she was making her mark. He gave up teaching within a year and went back to Alden to become chemist for a large manufacturing concern. He rose quickly, he became a man much sought after and soon gave up his position to become a consulting chemical engineer; he prospered greatly.

Then, eight years after he had said good-by to her, he found her leaning over a fence in Beaver Valley.

He finished changing the tire and drove his car to the side of the road. Sally was still leaning on the fence when he went to her and held out his hand. Immediately he knew that it was no hand to offer a lady.

"It needs a bit of washing," he said, smiling.

"Perhaps you would like a plunge," she suggested. "My pool is very near."

She brought a towel and showed him the way to the swimming hole. He found it fine indeed, deep and cool under the trees. He dressed leisurely, smoking his pipe, and went back to Sally Long. He was very curious about Sally. He wondered why she was there, whether her vision had come true, how the world went with her. He wondered if she were on a vacation. It seemed like a curious place for a vacation.

He looked at the house closely as it came into view. It was not large and was surely old, of rough stone with a frame addition; it was in good repair, so much as he could see of it, and the grounds immediately around it were neat. There were flower beds in good order and vines about the piazza.

Sally rose as he approached.

"Feel better?" she asked.

"Much—the world is a different place."

"Good, I thought it would help. Will you speak to mother?" Sally led him indoors and to a room on the ground floor. She touched her mother very gently. "Mother, this is Mr. Ware. You've heard me speak of him. He taught me chemistry in college."

Sally's mother was in bed. She held out a limp, uncertain hand to Ware and seemed relieved when she felt the touch of his. She nodded her head slowly.

"What name?" she asked indistinctly.

"Mr. Hamilton Ware," Sally repeated.

"I knew your daughter very well

when she was in college," Ware said. "She was a fine girl then. I hope she still is." He smiled at Sally.

The mother mumbled words which Ware did not understand.

Sally beckoned and they went out.

"I had to take you to mother," she said. "She would have known that a stranger was here and would have worried about it. Now she will forget. Will you wait here a minute while I see about supper?"

Sally went indoors and Ware had recourse to his half-finished pipe. Sally returned quickly and blew a horn from the piazza steps. An old woman, wearing a gingham apron on which she was drying her hands, came and stood in the doorway.

"Aunt Sue, this is Mr. Ware."

Aunt Sue offered him a damp, red hand and said:

"Pleased to meet you."

Sally had already explained to her, indoors, who Ware was. Now she added that Mr. Ware had come down the back road and by the merest chance had stopped opposite the house. Wasn't it curious to meet him again that way after all these years? Aunt Sue said:

"'Twas strange."

Two men came along the road from the barn, two tall, gaunt, round-shouldered men, unshaved, without collars, in blue cotton shirts and patched trousers, two hard-working farmers.

"Father, this is Mr. Ware." The younger of the two men shot a quick, almost frightened glance at Hamilton, made as if to wipe his hand on his trousers before offering it, thought better of it and held it forth, a gnarled, horny fist.

"Warm, ain't it?" he said.

"And uncle Henry," Sally said.

"Warm, ain't it?" uncle Henry said.

"Supper ready?"

"Soon's you aire," aunt Sue answered him.

"Guess 'twon't take long f' me to be ready," he said.

Two small boys came in through the kitchen door boisterously, but became quiet when they saw Ware.

"This is Bill and this is Arthur," Sally said to Ware.

They were fine-looking boys, clean cut, tousled-haired, clear-eyed, and healthy. They stared at Ware and held out their hands with no sign of embarrassment. Bill was about six, Arthur a year younger; Bill was tall and slender, dark-haired and dark-eyed, Arthur chunky and light-haired. Ware recognized in both of them the infallible signs of health, strength, and a high order of intellect.

"There's more ducks. I seen 'em," Bill said to Sally.

"There—are—more—ducks—I—saw—them," Sally said.

"There—are—more—ducks—I—saw—them," Bill repeated.

It was a curious meal, almost silent except for the chatter of the boys and Sally's answers to them. The two men in their shirt sleeves and suspenders and still without collars, each finger nail a black circle, spoke hardly at all. Aunt Sue brought the food from the kitchen, eating her portion between trips. Sally paid constant attention to her mother, going to and from her room. It was a simple, heavy meal, cold pork, boiled potatoes, beans, scallions, coffee, and cherry pie. The boys had nothing except an egg apiece and cereal and milk.

It was, to Hamilton Ware, a most depressing meal. The two men seemed as though they were resigned to a life which had no brightness in it, as though they had abandoned all matters of the mind and were satisfied with pure physical existence. They ate as cows chew their cuds, methodically and in silence.

The depression of the meal seemed not to affect Sally, though she made no attempt to talk to any one except Ware and the two boys. The boys talked

with every one and seemed content with grunts or monosyllabic answers from the old people. Ware wondered why Sally was there, how long and how often she was there. Though she had not told him so, he took it for granted that the boys were hers. They had not called her mother or any name by which mothers are called, but something which sounded like "Zarra."

When the meal was done the men rose and went off toward the barnyard. Aunt Susan told Sally not to mind about the dishes that night, she'd do them. Then Sally spoke to Ware.

"Do you mind if I read to mother for a few minutes?" she asked. "I do it every night after supper."

Ware did not mind, and Sally brought a book and sat down. Arthur climbed into her lap and remained there quiet as a mouse during the half hour Sally read, though he could have understood nothing of the story. It was years too old for him. Sally's voice seemed to lull him almost to sleep. It was so, too, with Bill, who, at Ware's suggestion, curled up in his lap and did not move till Sally had finished.

Sally closed the book.

"Did you write that, Sarah?" her mother asked.

"Yes, mother."

"Is that the end?"

"No, mother, there's lots more."

"What happened to her?"

"I mustn't tell you now. I'll read you some more to-morrow."

"What'd you say her name was?"

"Catherine Ward."

Sally spoke to the boys, "Run along. It's bedtime."

There was a great ceremony of saying good night before they finally went. Within five minutes they shouted from above.

"Come up and look at them," Sally said, and Ware followed her up the narrow stairs. They were in beds side by side on a sleeping porch. "I had

this built specially for them," she explained. "I sleep out there, too, when it's warm."

There was further ceremony of saying good night, and then Sally and Ware went back into the house. She opened a door and showed him her room.

"This is where I sleep and work," she said. "I have a bed and a table and a chair on the sleeping porch, but this is my sanctum most of the time."

It was a large, well-furnished room, showing the good taste of its owner.

They went downstairs to the piazza.

"I'll be right back," Sally said. "I'm just going to help aunt Sue with mother for a minute."

She had not changed very much in the years since Ware had seen her. The simple white dress she wore was very becoming; it set off all the charms of her exquisite figure. She was little, if any, stouter than she had been in her college days. Her voice, even when she spoke to the others, thrilled Ware now as it had thrilled him and many another man in bygone days. The greatest change was in her face. She was now, unquestionably, a beautiful woman. Her eyes were as they had always been, deep, dark, long-lashed eyes whose slightest glance set men's hearts throbbing, but her lips were not as they had been nor her smile. Her lips had taken on great sweetness and had softened her whole expression; they had given it dignity and gentleness and beauty, had given her an air of simplicity and serenity and sincerity such as she had never quite had before.

At last she returned.

"Now we can talk," she said. "I'm sorry that I had to inflict the family on you, but it couldn't be helped. The day is done for the family now. Tell me how the world has treated you." She sat down facing him.

"There is nothing to tell," he said.

"I lead a very quiet life. I live with my father and mother in Hopedale and I'm a chemist, specializing largely in dyes. I'm prosperous enough for comfort, healthy, and a bachelor. I couldn't be more commonplace if I tried. I'm not a bit interesting—you're the interesting one. Tell me about yourself."

"You see me. I'm what you see."

"Of course I see you before me, and of course I know what you are—the even more charming Sally than the Sally I used to know. But what are you when you're not here?"

"But I'm always here," she answered, "except, of course, that I go away for a day or two every now and then."

Ware was sure then that Sally's path had led to tragedy. It was still light enough for him to see her face and he looked at her intently for an instant, searching for some sign which would tell him what to say to her.

"It's not so bad here," she said, smiling. "Don't you like my boys?"

He had known they must be her boys, but why was she there with them?

"I like your boys very much. They are exactly such sons as one would expect with such a mother."

"You couldn't say anything nicer than that. They are the whole world to me."

"Does your husband live here with you?" Ware asked the question without consideration, almost involuntarily.

"I have no husband," she said simply.

Divorce! The word and all that it meant flashed through his mind. He had not thought before of the possibility of that, and yet it was not entirely surprising. Sally was a genius, she had felt great ambition, she had met and married some man in a moment of infatuation or with cold calculation, and then, from any one of a dozen causes, the crash had come. There was another tragedy behind the one he saw being enacted before his eyes.

Suddenly the thought came to him

that Sally's husband was dead, and he wondered why he had not thought of that before. He knew immediately why he had not thought of it: Sally had said that she had no husband; in the other case she would have said, "My husband is dead."

Sally was watching him, and Ware knew it, and he knew that he had no ability to hide his emotions. He did his best to think of the right thing to say, but before he discovered it Sally spoke.

"Don't look so doleful," she said. "There isn't anything to be sad about."

Ware tried to make his voice light. "I didn't mean to look doleful," he said, "but I can't help feeling that you've had hard luck, lots of it. I hope I'm wrong. I can't tell. You haven't told me about yourself—about what's happened in the last eight years."

"There's not much more to tell about me than there is about you. I went to New York—you knew about that—and things went rather well for a year. Of course I was only twenty-four then, and that's a little early to be sure about anything, but I was hopeful. Then mother had her accident and I came here. We knew almost at once that mother would always be blind, so I stayed. There wasn't anything else to do. Look!" Sally pointed to the hilltop over which came the first light of the full moon. "Won't you walk up there with me?" she said. "The valley is wonderful in the moonlight."

"I have a long way to go to-night," Ware said.

"Don't think of going. It's a long ride in the dark. I can put you up."

Her voice broke down his objections. "Are you sure it's all right?" he asked.

"Quite, I promise you."

"Then I'll stay, gladly," he said.

They went down the steps and around the house and, as they did so, Sally pointed out things she had done to the house and the gardens and walks.

"It's lots of fun doing them or having them done and it certainly increases one's comfort, materially and aesthetically. The old place was in pretty bad shape when I came back. It's a pleasant way to spend my money." She laughed a little. "I'm quite rich."

Again the question of Sally's husband rose in Ware's mind. Had Sally's money come from him? He knew of only one other way in which she could have obtained it.

"Has your writing made you rich?" he asked.

"'Rich' was a slight exaggeration," she said, "but I make a comfortable living at it and I have enough put away to start the boys in life—school, college, and all that."

Sally led the way up a well-worn path which followed a gentler grade than the rocky road. Ware followed her, turning over and over in his mind the facts he knew. Sally had two boys; one of them six or seven years old, the other younger. She had been in New York for a year and then had come back to her father's house and had never left it. She had no husband; she earned, by her writing, enough to take care of her boys, to educate them, and start them in life.

They reached their destination within ten minutes. Sally had chosen the spot well, for there was soft grass to sit on, a huge, half-buried boulder to lean against, and the valley lay below them in the moonlight.

"I don't think there is anything in the world more beautiful than the valley," she said. "Our house isn't really at the bottom of it. We're just in a little tributary of the main valley, the one down there to the south. The hill on the other side of the brook isn't a hill at all, really it's just a little bump. Your road goes down and down on the other side of it. Of course I'm prejudiced, but it is beautiful, isn't it, Professor Ham?"

Ware laughed. "That was my name, was it?"

"Yes, that was your name sometimes; we called you 'Hammy' mostly. It was rather complimentary; nicknames usually are."

"Incidentally, what is your name?" He had decided, on the way up the hill, to ask her that question; it might tell him what he wanted to know, and she could not object to the question.

"Well, I have two names," she said, as though the fact were amusing, "and one of them is Wentworth. Have you ever read any of Sally Wentworth's masterpieces?"

"I had no idea that you were Sally Wentworth," he said.

"I never used the name till I came here. It's a made-up name."

"What is your other name?" Ware asked.

"Just Sally," she said very softly, and then quickly she went on: "You were the first one to call me Sally; every one had always called me Sarah till you came along and changed it. 'Sally' is lots prettier than 'Sarah.' Sarah seems cold and formal and old-maidish. I always signed my letters 'Sally' in New York, business letters and all, and I still do. Poor old Hammy, are you terribly unhappy and terribly curious and a little frightened?"

"What makes you think that I am any of those things?"

"You're acting and looking just as you did when you thought you were in love with me. You weren't in love with me, were you? I was right about that, wasn't I? You were very good to me, and I wouldn't have hurt you for the world. But you were unhappy, a little, and a little frightened and pretty nervous, and you were curious about me. You wondered what sort of creature I'd turn out to be, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did."

"And now you know."

"Did you come to college from here?"

"Yes, straight from here. This and the school I walked four miles to and from every day were the only places I'd ever known. Was I very awful?"

Ware lied. "I don't remember. I remember you only as you were later on."

Sally laughed. "That's a whopper! But it doesn't make any difference; I couldn't help it. I learned quickly, didn't I, professor?"

"You certainly did."

"I often wonder if it would not have been better if I hadn't, if I hadn't learned anything at all. But what's the use of talking like that? It's nonsense—things are right as they are."

"You mean that you would not change anything, anything at all, if you could?"

"So far as I am concerned personally, no. There's no use my lying about—about others—you understand. It's not all fun, that part of it. But I have the satisfaction of knowing that I'm doing my duty, doing what no one else could do. I had the devil of a time here at first, especially with father and uncle Henry, but I won out finally. I'm the boss now, of them and of myself."

"As to the rest of it, I like the country. I'm very fond of writing and—and didn't I tell you once upon a time, way back in senior year in college, that I'd rather have children than anything else in the world?"

"Yes, you told me that. I remember it very distinctly."

"Well, then, Hammy, there you are. When I came back it looked as though I should have to stay here for years and years with mother. I could never marry, I could never bring my husband here to live—so I went out and adopted my two boys and I adopted the usual maternal egotism and warped vision along with them."

Ware lighted his pipe, and its smoke hung in the air, drifting slowly away from them and then upward, dissolv-

ing. Sally's face in the moonlight was very beautiful and very calm.

"Sally, the incomparable," he muttered.

She turned and smiled at him. "Do you like me, Hammy?" she asked.

He took her hand and patted it. She let him hold it for a moment. "That helps a lot," she said.

"You laughed at me a moment ago because I loved you once upon a time," he said. "Would you laugh if I loved you again?"

"No, I should probably cry. I almost cried to-night. I really did cry inside. Come, it's late, we must go back."

"Not yet—I must talk to you. What made you cry to-night?"

She gazed steadfastly across the valley, away from Ware. Finally she turned her eyes to his and smiled, but she did not speak.

"What made you cry to-night?" he asked again.

"Bill curled up in your lap," she said simply.

"Were your tears for Bill—or for yourself—or for me?"

Sally tried hard to laugh. "For the family," she said. "No, Hammy, I won't fib. It was for my fatherless boys. Perhaps I should have adopted girls, but fate was against it. I got my boys by a miracle; I wouldn't change now. They're as much my sons as though I were really their mother."

"Was it Providence, perhaps, that had two splendid boys waiting for you?" Ware's voice was husky. "A miracle of Providence, planned so that, some day, when they needed a father, you would turn to an old friend who loved you years ago?"

"I've thought of that," she said.

"You said that when you came back

here you thought that you would have to stay for years and years. Is that still so?"

"No, I shall be needed only a little longer—a day perhaps, perhaps a month, even a year, not more than that."

"And then?"

"Who knows?"

"Suppose an old friend who loved you were waiting?"

She did not answer him at once, but gazed across to the moonlit hills. Finally she said:

"Do you remember that I was going to see the world"—she laughed, a low, silvery laugh—"and eat it alive?"

"Yes, I remember that."

"Well, I've seen it. I still see it occasionally, and I have learned to appreciate old friends who once upon a time loved me."

"And still love you."

"And whom I have learned to love," she said.

He swept her into his arms and she clung to him.

He left early the next morning. Sally and her boys got into his car with him and rode across the bridge.

Sally pointed to the left. "That road goes over the hill and down into the big valley and then to Charlesford," she said. "You take the other. It's a good road, and two miles from here it runs into a fine new road which takes you almost straight to Alden."

He took her hand. Their eyes met, his and Sally's soft brown eyes.

"Until to-morrow," he said. He felt a gentle pressure from her hand.

"It seems a long time." Her words were a whisper.

He heard Sally's boys shouting to him as he drove away. Just before the road curved into a grove of trees he turned and waved his hand. Sally and her boys waved to him.



Buster Busts in Bohemia

By Rothvin Wallace

Author of "An Ebony Finish," "Done in Yellow," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWARD C. CASWELL

Do you want to know more about life in Greenwich Village? This is likely to amuse you, but for truth and humor the story will rank about 50-50.

IT'S really amazing what \$1,869.72 can do, or undo, for one.

Had it not been for such a sum of money, large or small, depending on the viewpoint, Shadrac Abednego Buster might have been content to remain star reporter, poet, and parapgrapher for the *Bingburg Bee*, in that clean-smelling, prosperous, mid-Western town where he was born, and which, a few years later, might have elected him one of its leading citizens and sent him to Congress.

—And his pretty little wife might have continued to rattle dishes in their cozy, porch-flanked cottage, and to dream her rosy dreams of *l'art pour l'art*, while doing the leading soprano rôle for the Methodist church choir.

But things will happen, as everybody knows. They happened to Mr. Buster, when, simultaneously, his grandfather died and left him \$1,819.72, and he received a check for fifty dollars from a New York magazine, in payment for his first, accepted work of fiction.

To S. Abednego Buster, as he signed his story, this, indeed, was fortune. It meant the realization of his burning ambition—that he might throw up his job, go to New York, absorb the culture of that marvelous bohemia of which he had read, and become the great author of his secret hopes.

To Mrs. Buster, that windfall of wealth meant equally as much. Like all sweet, parlor sopranos, she wooed the

operatic stage. And she could play the piano very well, too, having studied it for three years, while she was in high school. She knew she had real, *real* talent, because her teacher had told her. The minister had praised her voice without stint, and even her enemies among the congregation gave her the profound encomium of tears, when she sang at a wedding or a funeral. All she needed now to insure a throttle hold on everlasting fame, she felt, was a brief, finishing course with one of those great instructors in the metropolis.

They talked about their plans on the evening of the day the glad news came, but the daze of it was too great for coherent decision. Over the dishpan the following morning, however, Mrs. Buster had a radiant vision. It was illumined by glittering electric lights, and stood out, as follows, over the doorway of a Broadway theater:

GERTRUDE HATHAWAY BUSTER

Prima Donna.

That settled it. The thought glorified her throughout the day. When S. Abednego came home in the evening, and, as was his custom, flung his weekly pay envelope, containing twenty dollars, into her lap, she said to him with solemn irrelevance:

"Abe, dear, we must go."

"That's my sentiment, Gertie. No more of this sleepy little town. I made

the big jump to-day, and chucked my job—”

“You—you what?”

Gertie couldn't help a shrinking of fear at this news. She had not grown quite accustomed to affluence, and still was a slave to the weekly pay envelope.

“Chucked my job,” he repeated jubilantly. “I'm all through with these boobs, told 'em we were going to New York. Some of the fellows sorta sneered at me and said I'd fall down, but I'll show 'em.”

“You won't fall down,” she assured him confidently. Then, as a dreaming afterthought, “But even if you should, dear, I shall be a great singer. You know, Caruso and Galli-Curci earn—”

“You'll be—what?”

“A great singer,” she reaffirmed, with the confidence of true modesty. “You see, I intend to perfect my voice, and—”

“And go on the stage?” he interrupted in a horrified tone.

“Of course.” She looked at him with frank, blue-eyed assurance. “That's the only place where a singer can make real money.”

“Yes, that's true,” he admitted.

But there was a shade of dubiety in Buster's voice. It was not caused by any doubt as to the reward of the stage, but as to whether he should like his sweet, loving, unspoiled, little wife to enter upon such a career. He had heard and read a lot about the stage and its people; and once, when he was in Indianapolis, he had met two chorus girls from a musical comedy doing the “one-night tanks.” He was sure he would not like them as companions for his wife.

The Busters had a joyous dinner. Then, while she put things to rights, he ran down to the news stand at the station and searched the magazines for a story of that wonderful bohemia, whose sublime mysteries so soon were

to be unfolded to him in reality. He found just what he wanted in a magazine called *Yappy Yarns*, which gave him double pleasure, for this was the magazine which had bought his story. For the current issue, it had a cover-page drawing of a near-naked woman, dangling an evening-dressed man on a silken thread, with the Devil standing by, munching an apple.

The Busters had read many such stories, which had whetted their appetites for bohemia, and believed them. For S. Abednego was an honest author, an intense realist, in fact, and he felt sure that all authors of fiction were possessed of equal probity. For, in his one accepted story, had he not held up the mirror of naked truth to the Methodist Ladies' Sewing Circle? He chuckled to think of the stir which would ensue when the ladies read his description of their scandalous flirtations with Deacon Brown. No, he had not idealized the ladies one little bit. Therefore, he had every reason to believe that those authors of bohemia knew whereof they wrote, and were truthful in the matter.

“Ah, that's the life for us,” he sighed comfortably, after he had finished reading aloud a virile tale. “Think of the sweet smell of burning incense, of the soft lights, of the music, of the poetry, of the flash of intellect, of the beauty of it all. Ah, bohemia!”

“And real bohemians never seem to have to work,” Mrs. Buster remarked naively.

“Of course they work, but only when they are moved by divine inspiration,” he replied with an air of superior knowledge. “But isn't it a great story, Gertie?”

“I wish,” she said irrelevantly, “you would learn to call me Gertrude. It's more dignified, and now—”

“Gertrude it shall be,” he agreed. “But that story—”

“It's wonderful, Abe. And the pic-

ture of that young woman who sang, dressed only in a leopard skin——”

“And the author who wore a dress suit and a monocle——”

“And to think they were married all the time, but didn’t let on!” she cut in breathlessly.

“Oh, that was because they didn’t want to spoil their careers,” he explained in his most sophisticated manner. It’s quite the thing, Gertie—Gertrude—for artistic folks to conceal their marriage, and for the wife to use her maiden name. That preserves the sex interest, you know, makes them more interesting to the public.”

Gertrude thought a lot about this the following day, as she prepared for “the big jump,” as her husband called it. After all, it was rather sad to abandon the little cottage that had been theirs since their marriage, two years before. She hated to leave the flowers, in their pots and boxes, and the vines climbing over the porch. And there were the dog, and the canary, and the jar of goldfish, and her cozy nook in the bay window, where the sun poured in. What should she do with them now?

After four days of

feverish endeavor, everything had been settled. Kind, though awe-stricken, friends had accepted as gifts all which could not be sold to the secondhand man. And then they were off on their great adventure into bohemia.

“Nothing like burning the bridges



After all, it was rather sad to abandon the little cottage that had been theirs since their marriage, two years before.

when you're not going to use 'em again," said S. Abednego confidently, to which Mrs. Buster murmured a timorous "yes," and snuggled into the comfortable depths of her Pullman chair.

At their first dinner on the train, they had, as vis-à-vis at table, Mr. James K. Changer, a jovial, sportive, young, middle-aged chap, who wore a diamond, horseshoe stick pin with modesty, and beamed a gold-toothed smile with becoming ostentation.

Over the soup, he told them his name, and the Busters reciprocated. By the time oysters were served, they knew he was an artist, too, a dyer and cleaner, with three thriving shops in New York.

"And if you ever have any dyeing or cleaning to do—say, what's this place?" remarked Mr. Changer.

Buster told him, and in exchange for information regarding the flitting landscape, Mr. Changer, who was returning from a pleasure jaunt to "the coast," passed out some comments about the "big town."

"Well," he said in parting, "I size you like a good pair of kids; but look out for the roughnecks and the long-hairs when you hit the turf. They're both bad medicine."

Mrs. Buster pondered this homely advice for some time, and then said, in a spontaneous, explanatory outburst:

"He must mean the Indians, dear. I've read of so many 'wild Indians' in New York. But they must keep the Indians on reservations, so we won't meet them in bohemia."

S. Abednego gave her a commiserating glance and a reassuring pat on the hand. He was so sophisticated that he would not even deign a reply.

"And if you're goin' in for the high-art stuff," advised Mr. Changer in a later conversation, "don't let the corner-sewers get wise that you're married. It'll queer your game."

Mr. Changer was very kind, indeed.

After telling them just where to go, a quiet, moderately priced hotel in the Seventies, he promised to call the following evening and take them to dinner.

The Busters spent their first day in New York in attempting to reconcile their ocular disappointment with quondam mental pictures of the metropolis. For, like most first visitors, they had expected to find a compact expanse of skyscrapers, in the midst of an entertaining bohemia, filled with human exotics. They were not prepared to meet decidedly rational persons, each bent on his separate, useful task, nor to see sturdy little shops and ramshackle centenarians of buildings, squatting complacently at the base of forty-story monoliths of stone and steel.

As is usual with out-of-town folk who read magazine fiction and newspaper features, they had an idea most New Yorkers spent their time bending over stock tickers, spending their money, shimmy dancing, attending the theaters, cabaretting, and drinking wine. Nor did they know that the "big town" actually is so big it takes time for the limitations of the mind to grasp the bigness of its great institutions, its multitudinous interests, its mixture of many peoples. But, as often is the case, they tried to take in the entire exhibit in a day, and were impressed chiefly by the general bustle, the subway trench digging in progress in Broadway, and the unwashed loungers about the Aquarium, who find the Battery Park benches more attractive than the abundant water supply in the scope of their vision.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Abednego Buster, therefore, were a sadly disgruntled pair when, in the late afternoon, they survived the subway rush hour and finally reached their hotel.

"There *are* lots of people here, and they haven't a bit of manners," complained Mrs. Buster, as she tried to reshape her best hat.

"Uh-huh," grunted Mr. B., who was counting his remaining \$1,697.86, which, for safety, he was carrying about in his pockets, unmindful of the genus "holdemups," which frequents New York's streets and cafés.

"Mr. Changer said he would call for us at seven o'clock," pursued Mrs. B.

"Waits till nearly bedtime before he even starts dinner," growled friend husband. "But I suppose that's the regular hour in this town."

"Now, you are getting grouchy," she enjoined sharply. "Mr Changer said he would take us to a real, *real* bohemian restaurant. So you just go shave and clean up, and prepare to be pleasant."

S. Abednego saw the wisdom of the suggestion. He did need cleaning up, and knowledge told him that strained nerves threatened a family jar.

The genial host arrived promptly, resplendent in a new brown plaid suit. He was finished off in a red cravat with an emerald stick pin, brown derby, and brown patent-leather shoes. The last mentioned had silk-uppers, a shade lighter than the vamp, and pearl buttons. He wore tan gloves with three black stripes down the back, and looked as spick-and-span as if he had just been dyed and cleaned in one of his own incomparable establishments.

"All ready?" he greeted jovially. "Well, then, I'll shoot you into real bohemia, red ink, spaghetti, fried chicken, short-haired dames, long-haired poets, and all the trimmin's. Come on; the old hearse is clicking dimes away on the taximeter."

The "old hearse" happened to be the vehicle for the Busters' very first taxicab ride, and it conducted them to one of those "French table d'hôte" places in the low-down Forties. The pension—pronounced pong-see-awng by the habitués—was a dusty little place, brilliantly illuminated with one-hundred-candle-power electrics. Three soiled cats crept about, begging for food,

much to the expressed annoyance of two dogs which had been leashed to table legs by their owners. But it was all so new and exciting for the Busters that they enjoyed it greatly.

"I—I thought," ventured Mrs. Buster, "that bohemia always was lighted with softly shaded candles."

"That's old-world stuff," explained their host. "Them Europeans have to pay such a big tax for light at home that, when they get to a near-free country, they think they've found the candle of youth, and burn it at both ends of the wire."

Dinner came in as usual—hors d'œuvre, consisting of a little dead fish in oil, a young onion, and a sliver of old celery; then a thick, greasy soup, with a foreign name; spaghetti or creamed cod, as one preferred.

Meanwhile, an impromptu entertainer rose from one of the tables, and amid the plaudits of friends, attacked a lonesome and unresisting piano. Changer said he was a feature with one of the "big-time" vaudeville acts. Following this, a stout young woman sang a sentimental song and made Mrs. B. feel sorry for her. An ex-clown from the Hippodrome cut some slapstick capers, then somebody turned on a phonograph, and nearly everybody danced around the tables.

While this went on, the Busters tucked away the remainder of their dinner, which included a wafer of roast beef, a slab of chicken, a dab of ice cream, and a small smear of cheese with burned coffee. Also, they had absorbed a quart each of red table-d'hôte wine, and assured themselves that, at last, they had embraced bohemia, or bohemia had embraced them, they didn't care much which, just so they were embraced.

Following a breathless fox trot, Mr. Changer, too, was embraced by an aesthetic-looking young man, who wore large, dark-rimmed spectacles, an ama-



He introduced this person
as Mr. Marcelle Hammerton, artist.

teur mustache, and a flowing necktie. He introduced this person as Mr. Marcelle Hammerton, artist; and Mr. Hammerton, disdaining the formality of an invitation, promptly sat down and ordered a drink. Be it said, incidentally, that this "French table d'hôte" emporium had no qualms regarding any prohibition enactment, in so far as any of its regular patrons were concerned.

Marcelle so liked the courtesy extended that he beckoned to several friends, and had them also order drinks.

And Mr. Changer, by way of making general conversation, began to expatiate on the virtues with which he had invested the Busters. "Bravest pair of kids I ever knew," he volunteered; "chucked up everything for the big chance, with a stake of only \$1,800. But they'll make good, and I'll say so."

S. Abednego was not highly pleased by reference to his fortune as "only \$1,800," but he became mollified under the warmth of Mr. Hammerton's quick sympathy, for whether because of men-

tion of Buster's cash capital, or out of sheer good-fellowship, Marcelle drew his chair a bit closer and assumed a confidential manner.

"I feel," he said, "that you and I are kindred souls, for, as you have come to find fame and fortune, so came I, a dozen years agone."

"And you—you found fame and fortune?" ventured Mr. Buster, gazing upon his "kindred soul" with undisguised admiration.

"Of course." A tone of surprise charged the finality of Marcelle's reply.

"You are an—an artist, Mr. Changer said. I suppose you do—"

"Everything that is art," volunteered Marcelle, with a patronizing wave of his hand. "I am proficient in all things that are given for a true artist to do. It is my belief that a thorough artist has no limitations, since all the arts, basically, are analogous. Ergo, I paint. When I tire of painting, I make sculptures, or, perhaps, I write a play or a novel. Sometimes I interpret my mood by dancing, or I play the violin. When the inspiration seizes me, I dash off a bit of poetry."

As the modern Ruskin continued modestly to talk about himself, S. Abednego Buster became more and more impressed. He was forming, indeed, a worth-while friendship, one that must be of great value to him in molding his new career. Therefore, he was not sorry when Mr. Changer remarked that it was eleven o'clock and begged to be excused that he might be at business early in the morning.

"But you stay," he added to the Busters. "Stick to the old ship as long as you like, and have a good time. I'll look you up in a few days. And if you need any dyeing or cleaning done—well, here's some of my cards."

Changer paid the dinner check and for the round of drinks for Marcelle and his friends. Buster noted that the total came to only a little more than

five dollars, very reasonable, he thought, for such a wild night in bohemia.

"Good fellow, Changer," remarked Marcelle, "but not in our class; just one of those ordinary business fellows, you know, no art tendencies, and with a mind only for trade and money."

Buster nodded agreement, while he shot a look askance at the fellow across the table from Mrs. Buster. This impudent rascal was stroking Mrs. Buster's hand and telling her how beautiful it was, just made for music, he said. Buster felt a queer little crawl of revulsion wriggle down his spine, but he supposed it was all right, in bohemia, and said nothing.

"Yes," Marcelle wagged on, "a nice chap and a free spender, you understand, but not at all in our class."

And Marcelle thereupon took advantage of his "kindred soul's" absorption to make a sign intelligible only to the waiter, who got an order all around for "the same."

Throughout the subsequent two hours, similar magic brought several recurrent helpings of "the same." Then Buster noted vaguely that all of the party, except Marcelle, had drifted away, and that an attendant was putting out the lights.

"One o'clock," shouted the latter sententiously.

"That means closing time," explained Marcelle, as S. Abednego gasped at the lateness of the hour. "This joint used to stay open all night, but I guess the boss didn't come across with sufficient filthy lucre. Well, just one little nightcap, eh?"

Marcelle made the magic sign for "the same."

"And as I was about to say," he resumed, "you two charming people *must* let me introduce you to the *real* bohemia, down in Greenwich Village, you know. This is sham stuff, where out-of-town visitors and tired business men deceive themselves into believing that

they are in bohemia. But bohemia, old dears, is, after all, but a state of mind. However, Mr. Buster, as I remarked before, you and I are kindred souls, so I know, intuitively, just what you need for the furtherance of your art. You must have atmosphere for your proper development, and, if I may have the honor, I shall take it unto myself to see that you get it. Perhaps you might like me to call to-morrow afternoon?"

"Oh, I wish you would!" interjected Mrs. Buster heartily. "And I should like to see more, too, of your delightful friend, Mr. Dazell. He is so inspiring to an ambitious singer."

"Yes, do come around," supplemented Buster, but without any too great enthusiasm for Mr. Dazell. It was he who had eulogized the beauty of Mrs. Buster's musical hand.

The respectful waiter stood aloof as Marcelle was taking his polite adieu. Then, as S. Abednego was helping his tired wife with her wrap, the respectful waiter respectfully laid the check on the table. S. Abednego looked over a list of drinks that came to a total of \$11.90.

"Want me to pay this?" he snapped.

"The other gentleman said it was your check, sir," replied the waiter, still respectfully.

Mr. Buster drew forth his roll, stripped off a ten and a two-dollar bill, and passed them over. Then, remembering that he always used to tip the waiter at the "Oyster Palace" back home ten cents, he said magnanimously:

"Keep the change."

This waiter, however, was more accustomed to lobster-palace than oyster-house tips. Very respectfully, therefore, he laid a lonesome dime on the drink-soaked tablecloth, and remarked:

"Thank you, sir, but I shouldn't know what to do with it. Perhaps you might like to bring it in and spend it some other night, sir."

"Mighty decent chap, that waiter," said Buster to his wife, after having pocketed the dime. "But those other fellows stung me for the entire bill."

"I suppose that's the way they do in bohemia, dear," she yawned.

Outside, they found Marcelle standing on the curb, searching his pockets.

"You know, old dear," he burst forth, "I've lost all my money. Could you lend me a quarter to get home?"

Mr. Buster, being still new to the ways of bohemia, not only "lent" the quarter, but insisted that Marcelle take five dollars, which sum, of course, Marcelle apologetically accepted. He had a hole in his pocket through which his money had leaked, but he had a check due on the morrow and all that sort of thing—and the Busters were very, very sorry, indeed. Also, they were learning the ways of bohemia, though they did not fully realize that fact at the time.

On the following morning, Buster had intended to visit the editor of *Yappy Yarns*, who had bought his first story, and outline a great, reconstructive novel he intended to write. But because of his previous night's débüt in bohemia, he was unable to raise a clear head from the pillow before noon. Then, while he and Gertie were at breakfast, his friend Marcelle arrived.

Marcelle assured them he was not hungry, but, since they insisted that he join them, he would have a grapefruit, some bacon and eggs and fried potatoes, a plate of toast, and a pot of coffee, which small snack cost Buster another \$2.40. He looked dourly at his wife while Marcelle was off greeting an acquaintance, but she reassured him with the reminder that they were just finding bohemia.

"Got to pay a pretty big reward on what you find," snorted Buster.

However, Marcelle proved so charming that he dissipated all thought of sordid expense.

"And now," he said confidently, "I'm going to put you two dears on exactly the right track. This common, commercial hotel is no place for true artists. As I said last night, you must have atmosphere, you must have environment for your work, you must have the association of those who will feed you with inspiration. Let me take you to the place where such as you should live, where genius may blossom and bloom to ripe fruition."

"Doesn't he talk beautifully?" asked Mrs. B., sotto voce, of her husband.

"He's got the right dope, too," agreed Buster enthusiastically.

So they allowed Marcelle to lead them to "The Village," whose doings have worked the undoing of many a potential genius. And Marcelle conducted them directly to the home of a friend, a creaking three-room apartment on the second floor of one of those tatterdemalion houses which had gray whiskers when George Washington was a boy.

"Here," he proclaimed, "you may live in the very heart of bohemia."

It happened Marcelle's friend was preparing, at the moment, for a long tour on the concert stage, that might include even Japan and Australia. He was going to put his furniture in storage; but of course, if Mr. Buster wished to buy it—

"I'd advise you to accept it, old dears, and take over the apartment," hastened Marcelle. "No one of your artistic temperaments can live in a sordid hotel, and here, at less expense, you have the very atmosphere you need."

"And note the fine fireplace—very rare these days in New York," interposed his friend.

"And very essential to the romance which makes for true artistic development," added Marcelle.

"Uh-huh," remarked S. Abednego Buster.

Meanwhile, Mrs. B. was appraising

the furniture and general equipment. Having come from a clean, trim, little cottage, she was not greatly impressed.

"Where do you eat?" she inquired unromantically, after an inspection of the rusty gas stove and the greasy cupboard.

"Eat? Oh, anywhere you like," replied Marcelle's friend. "There's Molly's, down the street, The Holland Skillet, The Rats' Attic, and half a dozen delicatessen stores around the corner. They're all very convenient."

"But when you want a meal at home?" she persisted.

"Why—why, when you want only a snack, just pass it around on plates, or grab it off that packing box I use for a kitchen table. For a more pretentious spread, we sometimes serve it on top of the piano, and eat standing up."

Mrs. Buster was too polite to express her exact feelings. She had heard, however, that true bohemians lived in such manner. She turned lovingly to the piano and ran her fingers over the dusty keys.

"Beautiful instrument," she observed.

"Very latest and best baby grand on the market," assured Marcelle's friend.

"Nice phonograph, too," complimented Buster, lifting the lid of a handsome "period" piece in one corner.

"Cost three hundred dollars," was the assurance.

The remainder of the furniture, however, was not what Mrs. Buster would have had in the little cottage back home. It consisted of several packing boxes, with bizarre cretonne covers thrown over them; three shabby chairs, a rickety table, two lopsided couches, and a pair of dusty, time-eaten rugs. Half a dozen tallow-smeared candlesticks, an equal number of faded pillows, and walls full of unframed pictures completed the equipment.

"You'll find this," encouraged Marcelle's friend, "the best bargain in New

York-rent only forty dollars a month, and I'll sell you the entire outfit for only five hundred dollars cash."

"The piano, too?" gasped Mrs. Buster.

"That and the phonograph also, and—"

"Don't include *my* paintings," interrupted Marcelle.

The baby grand alone was worth more than the price asked, and Mrs. Buster nodded covertly to her husband to accept the offer.

"You see," said Marcelle, "you'll save money all around. You are paying five dollars a day at the hotel, for room alone, and then you have your meals to buy, and—well, you can figure it out for yourselves."

Mrs. Buster gave another assenting nod, and her husband drew forth the family bank roll. The eyes of Marcelle and his friend glistened as he peeled off five hundred dollars.

"Give me a receipt," he said simply.

Marcelle's friend hesitated, as if not quite understanding.

"A receipt," reiterated Buster.

"Oh, yes—yes, of course." And Marcelle's friend utilized the top of the piano as a desk, while he scratched acknowledgment of the money on the back of an old envelope.

"And now," insinuated Marcelle, "I'll take these paintings of mine out of your way. My friend, you know, has been disposing of them to various art buyers who call on him from time to time."

"Well, you can let 'em hang," said Buster generously. "Maybe—"

"But you don't know any art buyers, old dear; and I must have sales," reminded Marcelle, who made quick work of stripping the walls. "This futuristic art of mine is in great demand," he added modestly.

And as he had shrewdly foreseen, Mrs. Buster had no taste for the grimy, unadorned wall paper. Consequently,

she jumped at his condescending offer to let the whole lot go for a paltry hundred dollars, just because the Busters were such jolly good friends. S. Abednego gave a little inward shiver as his bank roll shrank further, while Marcelle radiated in receiving the highest price of his life for a batch of good canvas ruined by bad painting.

The deal having been effected, Gertrude was eager to occupy her new home. So, while her husband and Marcelle went up to the hotel to check out and get their luggage, she began to put things to rights. She could not, however, resist the temptation to spend a quarter of an hour playing with the keys of that grand, grand piano. She even sang a little song, to one of her own accompaniments. It was a lovely piano and so cheap, too. And then, while she went about her work, she started the phonograph grinding out Caruso and Galli-Curci. It was a darling phonograph and so inexpensive.

Marcelle, as usual, came back with an idea, with which he already had inculcated S. Abednego. It was that they should have a housewarming, that they might meet all the worth-while people in "The Village." He would arrange all the details, of course. But, meanwhile, he would take them about a bit, and would find the best musical instructor in town for Mrs. B., and the greatest literary agent that ever lived to serve S. Abednego. It was all very simple, if one knew what to do. Marcelle knew, quite naturally, and his new friends had implicit trust in him.

So, for the next few days and nights, Mr. and Mrs. Buster were treated to a round of "The Village." They inhaled rancid grease at many a hole-in-the-wall eating place; they met short-haired women and long-haired men; they absorbed cigarette smoke and incense fumes and beer and red wine and ideas, ideas which, if the habitués of the "studios" had their way, would



They danced to the phonograph, sang to the grand piano, and basked in the freedom of the "love" which pleases the chameleons of bohemia.

make the old world turn on its back, socially, economically, artistically, and politically. They heard all of the problems of life solved by the candle flame and the firelight glow.

The Busters, indeed, were in a daze; and somehow, Mrs. Buster was not entirely satisfied. It didn't seem quite so appetizing, after all, as her clean, little cottage back home. And then, too, Marcelle, their mentor, wouldn't let her be known as Mrs. Buster. He insisted

that she be introduced by her maiden name.

"Because," he reiterated frequently, "marriage really interferes with one's artistic career down here. For a couple merely to live together is interesting, you know; but marriage is so plebeian. It indicates you have locked the door on destiny, and nobody cares to open it. Don't tell anybody you're actually married."

Neither was that just pleasing to Mrs.

Buster, although their friend Changer had told them virtually, though not virtuously, the same. However, she was learning in the school of bohemia, and, doubtless, would be used to it by the time she had earned her diploma.

Meanwhile, Buster was spending his money quite liberally, although he noted that the bob-heads and the long-hairs he met confined their spending chiefly to conversation. He was assured by Marcelle, however, that he was "getting in solid with the bunch." Marcelle, incidentally, had borrowed fifty dollars more, with the assurance he would pay it when he sold his next picture.

Buster found time, one afternoon, to drop in on the editor of *Yappy Yarns*, who had bought his first story about the Methodist sewing ladies. He was confident the editor would approve of his idea for the great American novel he intended to write. He was quite disconcerted, therefore, when the editor received him with cool politeness, and told him every young author, for the last half century, had rewritten the identical plot.

"But, of course, Mr. Buster," he added, "*Yappy Yarns* always is looking for good, fresh material. Study the magazine, and when you think you have anything that will suit us, send it in. We'll be glad to look at it."

So, this was the last word from the one man in the big town who, Buster sincerely had believed, would take him in his arms and hurl him, a brilliant star, into the literary firmament. Buster, indeed, was crushed; and it was well for him, perhaps, that this was the night of his great housewarming for "The Village."

On arrival home, Buster found his "studio" enshrouded with the dismal oxford gray of what is known poetically as "the gloaming," and in a dim corner he discovered his wife, sitting with a *soi-disant* artist who called himself

Henri de Levinski. Henri had radical views on everything, including his own importance, and an extravagant manner of praising Mrs. B. that was, to Mr. B., quite distasteful.

"Oh, Abe!" she cried on his entrance. "Henri is going to paint my portrait. I'm to sit for him every day. Think of it!"

"All right," growled Buster ungraciously, "I'll think of it."

Marcelle breezed in at the moment and saved the situation, even though he saved nothing else. When it came to mere matters of money, Marcelle's visits never were saving. Now, as master of ceremonies for the housewarming, he required forty dollars to pay for the supplies he had ordered; also, he desired twenty-five as a retaining fee for the literary agent he had engaged to handle Buster's wares, and, if Buster didn't mind, he would borrow five for himself.

"That will be seventy dollars in all. Gee, old man, you're getting off cheap," Marcelle confided.

With as much cheer as he could assume, Buster handed over the seventy.

"Do you think to invite Changer?" he asked.

"No, I didn't. He's a nice chap, you know, but not in our set exactly, and—"

"Well, this is my party, and I want him," snapped Buster.

Somehow, he seemed to feel the need of companionship of a person who gave at least the impression of responsibility, even though removed from the "set" Marcelle had selected for him.

He telephoned to Changer forthright, and felt a little better when the dyer and cleaner assured him that he would be glad to "come down and look 'em over."

Meanwhile, Mrs. Buster, known to "the set" as Miss Hathaway, continued to sit with De Levinsky, in the gloaming, while Buster gloomed. And when

she went to the piano and began to sing it, "In the Gloaming," he beat a hasty retreat from the house.

It was fate, then, that dragged Shadrac Abednego Buster into the path of Arnice Artagnan Browne, sculptress of destiny, exponent of liberty, and disciple of the untrammeled life of bohemia. He was headed for the corner saloon, to get a bottle of near-beer, when he met her.

At her cordial solicitation, he passed up the near-beer and accompanied her to her studio, a dingy hall room on the fourth floor of a dilapidated Christopher Street house. There he absorbed her philosophy of freedom, her blond loveliness, and her childlike insouciance. She listened attentively while he told her of his troubles.

"And you appeal to me as such a noble man," she commiserated, stroking the hair from his perspiring brow.

After that, S. Abednego felt much better, and didn't care half so much about the nascent intimacy of De Levinsky and Miss Hathaway, née his wife. Of course, Arnice would be at the housewarming.

Buster left her to dress for the occasion, and, meanwhile, wandered into the grasp of a polite handbook man who did business in the neighborhood, and who knew more about horse racing than the kings who invented the sport. And in his abandon of the moment, S. Abednego backed every tip to the limit of his means. Then he went home, also to dress for the housewarming.

It may be stated to his credit that Marcelle had overlooked nothing, from a strictly bohemian viewpoint, to make the party a great success. It started early and ended early—the following morning. The candles dripped and flickered, the fireplace sputtered and flared, the incense reeked, the fumes of alcohol and cigarettes and perfume contributed to somnolence, if not com-

plete anaesthesia. And the devotees, the callow young and the foolish middle-aged, sprawled on the floor, on cushions and newspapers, and declared themselves supremely happy. They danced to the phonograph, sang to the grand piano, and basked in the freedom of the "love" which pleases the chameleons of bohemia.

Buster, just before he reached the end of things, was conscious of several more or less important matters, that Marcelle was making a fool of himself, that his friend, Changer, seemed disgusted with the party, and, before leaving, suggested he look him up in a day or two, that Henri de Levinski was entirely too attentive to Mrs. Buster, but that it was very soothing to have Arnice Artagnon Browne stroke his hair, and, occasionally, brush her soft lips across his fevered forehead. Everything else was as a misty dream.

It was at four o'clock on the afternoon following the housewarming that S. Abednego was awakened by a violent pounding on the door. To his dazed surprise, he found that he was alone, and had been sleeping with his shoes on, his head pillow'd on a stack of Marcelle's paintings in a corner of the studio. He arose painfully and opened the door.

"I'm the music-store collector," proclaimed the visitor. "Boss says you've got to come across with something on the jazz box and the canned Caruso."

"Eh—says what?" gasped Buster.

"Aw, the piano and the phonograph," elucidated the polite collector. "And if you don't come across, he going to take 'em back."

"Why, I—I bought those instruments—" Buster paused, as a great light began to shine on his fancied bargain. "How much is due on them?"

"On the piano, \$475, and there's \$90 still owing on the talking machine; but the boss says if you'll pay him \$25—"

"Say I!" snapped Buster. "You can't take 'em out to-night, can you?"

"No, but—"

"Then come around to-morrow at this time, and you can take anything here you want."

Whereupon Buster slammed the door and sat down to think. And the thoughts which came were not any too cheerful.

In the first place, Buster had a headache, and was rapidly approaching a heartache. He wondered where his wife had gone. He wondered why Arnice had deserted him. He wondered what had become of Marcelle. He remembered his bets on the races, and wondered how much he had won. That, at least, was a comforting thought. He would go out and interrogate the handbook man.

"Bad day for favorites," the horse-racing gentleman told him. "Pretty rotten, old man, but they all lost for you. Every one of those ponies you backed must have sprained an ankle before he started. But for to-morrow, I've got—"

"Well, I hope you sprain an ankle before you get rid of it," growled Buster as he hastened away.

He was pained to learn from Village gossip, a few minutes later, that Marcelle and Arnice Artegnon Browne had eloped to Chicago, and that his wife was having tea with De Levinski in the grill of the Hotel Preveert.

Then, sadly, he sat down on a bench in Washington Square and counted the remnant of his quondam fortune of \$1,869.72. It had dwindled to the distressing sum of \$127.56. His one cheering hope lay in Changer, who had

suggested he might have "something good" for him.

After a ten-minute telephone talk with Mr. Changer, Mr. Buster was a new man. He rushed gayly to the place he called home, and, using the top of the grand piano for a writing table, indited the following terse note to his wife:

MY DEAR MISS HATHAWAY: My good friend, Mr. Changer, has been kind enough to offer me the best job of my life. He is opening a string of dyeing and cleaning establishments, and wants to engage one of my literary attainments as his advertising and general publicity manager.

Fine finish for a would-be great American novelist, writing such ads as "Be Clean Before You Dye." However, the salary is seventy-five dollars in real money, payable every week. His one condition is that I "cut out that damned, cheap bohemia" and live in some clean suburban place, where "you can get the fever out of your system and evolve some worth-while ideas."

I'm for it. Ergo, I'm going back to the hotel for a day or two, until I get suitably placed. If your artistic career will free you, you are welcome, as always, to share my lot. Yours for better, S. A. B.

Buster had a miserable, lonely dinner that night, then took his gloomy thoughts to his cheerless hotel room.

About nine o'clock the door was thrust open unceremoniously, and an excited little woman flung herself hysterically into his willing arms.

"Oh, Abel!" she cried. "I'm glad—so, so glad! And we'll go to-morrow and find a little cottage, just like we had back home, and in the evenings we'll have dinner, and I'll sing, just for you, and you'll read to me, like you used to do, and—"

"They won't be stories on bohemia," said Buster with finality.





Decently and in Order

By Elizabeth Irons Folsom

Author of "The Missing Life Line," "A Corner of His Heart," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

The strange story of Johns J. Savage, who put his affairs in order and was decently "drowned by accident" from the deck of a liner.

THAT was the way in which Johns J. Savage's estate had been arranged. I found it so when I had qualified as executor under his will. There was not a loose end in all his many-sided business; everything was squared, completed, definitely placed. Even his desk, when it was my province to open and go through it, was in precise form; there was not a letter too many, none dealing with anything except business; there was not a letter lacking, nothing to hunt, nor to perplex—each detail was driven home and clenched; papers lay at right angles, pens paralleled side by side; blotters had no left-over scrawls. It gave me an uncanny feeling. Could any man be so orderly if he were not planning for his executor's comfort? But, of course, Johns J. Savage had not planned, for he had been drowned by accident from the deck of a liner upon which he was starting abroad.

I was both glad and sorry to find I had been named as executor; glad, because I had known Johns most of his life and as intimately, I thought, as any man had found it possible to know him; sorry, because I could not find reflected in the terms of his careful will any one of the things which I knew were his interests. He had been a faddist, as much as a practical man ever is. He

had founded more than one charity, inaugurated more than one enterprise which needed money. There were pensioners who had a right to expect. But the will was brief and sharp. The entire estate, in fee absolute, passed to his "beloved wife, Alicia Bert Savage." Every penny of the great fortune was hers to do with as she pleased; every interest he had made during fifteen years of business life was high and dry.

I had not grown used to the idea even after the work was done and my final report filed. It was an easy task, no complication to be met. I was soon through. Alicia Bert Savage had taken the reins, and even then, whenever I sat relaxed and furnished myself with thought, I was apt to reflect upon what seemed to me the oddness of the extremely decent and in-order manner in which Johns had disposed of his property. I knew he had not cared for his wife, nor she for him; she had taken no part in the piling up of his estate. Therefore, I was never out of a puzzle to pick at in solitude.

I happened to be looking at the door when Alicia made her appearance at Fanny Furbish's dinner. Fanny always crowded her small rooms to suffocation. She never had a place to stop in her invitation list and those bidden were extremely likely to accept because of

the value and quantity of the food she would produce.

I had been late, and had just squeezed under the edge of a bristling palm for a chance to stand. There was really no place in the room for all the effulgent beauty of Alicia as she appeared at the door.

I had not seen her in evening dress for two years. At my interviews with her, which had of necessity been many, she had dashed her beauty by the raiment of the afflicted. I had heard of her gorgeous return into the world, but I had not seen it, until the prospect of Fanny's special crab-meat service had drawn me out.

I stared. If there was too much of Alicia, as it had always seemed to me, it was a splendid superabundance. The shining dullness of her crowded flesh never failed to hold the eye, for her flesh looked touchable. There was nothing of the aloofness of marble about it; one could be sure it was warm by looking at it. Her eyes were opened a bit wider than usual, and her straight brows seemed thicker and darker. There was a soft fuzziness about the upper part of Alicia's cheeks and ears, through which her color came vividly. Her shiningly black hair was coiled and recoiled in some amazing complexity; she had a white flower in it, which hung down and touched her shoulder; it should have been a red flower to really fit the picture, but Alicia had not reached reds yet. There was positively nothing to hold her black gown to her but a string of tiny, hazardous jet beads over each arm top. Across the edge of her scanty bodice there lay a line of glittering stones, defying by their size and number any criticism of their appropriateness. Alicia had been buying stones, I speculated as I looked.

It was surely no time nor place to wonder why Johns had married her. But I had a quick vision of the first time I had seen them together shortly

after he brought her to town. She was effulgent then, in an uncaparisoned way; older than he by a number of years, as tall, heavier. I recalled him as he was then; slight, grave as he always was, his forehead knitted, as if he, too, were wondering what he had meant by it. He had not seemed the man to marry for soft flesh. I wondered then, and I wonder now, for this story is not going to explain, as I have no way of finding out.

I was still looking, watching her greeting of friends. She did not smile much, accepted the attention paid her rather languidly, as far as the women were concerned. She leaned slightly against the doorframe, and there was jostling about her and eagerness to get to her.

I was looking at it when Fanny caught at me. Conway Forbes was following her through the furniture.

"You dear!" cried Fanny softly but with deep earnestness. "Do you mind if I tuck you and Conway off at a little table in this corner?" Sections of Fanny's guests often ate from tables placed about the rooms. They must. The dining room would have fallen apart at the idea of holding her usual number of people. The overflow folded legs and gathered elbows close about small tables cramped together. "You dear! Do you mind if you sit at this left-over place? You see, I didn't know Mrs. Jasper had two guests. It's spoiled all my seating. I have had to change the place cards three times, and if you and Conway didn't mind—you're the oldest friends, so I can ask you—if you didn't mind eating alone back here, it would help me out amazingly. I wanted to put you with Alicia—"

"Heaven forbid," I edged in piously.

"And Conway just won't sit with the Allinsons. What was it, Conway, that was the matter? And he suggested that you and he—"

"Fanny, my dear," I interrupted,



There was really no place in the room for all the effulgent beauty of Alicia as she appeared at the door.

"nothing would suit me better than to sit back where I may not be observed during the act of mastication. It's an ugly rite. I wonder why we do it in public. By all means, put me with Conway. Hullo," I said to him casually. I did not particularly like Conway Forbes.

Just then some one must have taken a long breath or something, for a desk littered with jangling things toppled, and there was a crash, a murmur of apologies, and Fanny's nice voice saying that it really did not matter at all. People edged and contorted, and off at the dining-room door there was, at last, a man in a white coat with an uplifted tray.

I had quite a lot of room. My faithful fern fingered out sharply all about me, and I saw that I was to enjoy myself, for the table had been juggled about for us, and it slid into the niche as Fanny's long experience had known it would. I settled and looked across its narrow breadth. Conway was settled, too; the back of a sofa, draped with an Oriental thing, sheltered him. So we smiled.

"The impossible has been achieved," I said. "Every one has been seated and the dinner is under way."

"And a very good way, of course."

"Are you ever as uncomfortable as at Fanny's parties?"

"Oh, well, it's delightful—the naïveté with which she jams us about and makes us like it."

"What is your particular dish of hers?" It was a brazen remark, but I let it go and answered:

"Crab meat à la Fanny. And yours?"

"Chicken à la the same."

I laughed pleasantly. It was to be

a long session, so I might as well be agreeable, although, as I have said, I did not particularly like Conway Forbes. He was forty, round-headed, had published some verse—the sentimental kind—and was apt to pose, head on hand. Then, he talked too much of the things he wrote poetry about, life—life and sad fate—atmospheric effects—the love of women, and such things.

The first course came gratifyingly.

"I am sitting just where I can see Mrs. Savage," he remarked.

"She is good to see."

"But she puzzles me."

"Yes?"

"Yes. You see, I knew them both so very well. I was Johns' closest friend, I think."

Now I had considered myself Johns' closest friend, so I said nothing.

"You knew them well, too," said he.

"I knew him well."

"Oh, yes. You were his executor. You knew him best in a business way. Now"—he hesitated, leaned over the table, and lowered his voice—"now—as his best friend to his legal adviser, maybe I dare ask, *why* did he do it?"

"Do what?"

"Leave all his property to her."

I hoped the glance I gave him was a cold one. I think it was.

"His wife? Why shouldn't he leave his money to her?"

He leaned farther.

"You know there was no love between them."

"Oh, love!" I said flippantly. "What's love? They were married."

"But why did he marry her?"

"How do I know? Why does anybody marry anybody? Look about at your friends, my dear young man. Can you figure out in any one case why they married? It's always a wonder."

"I don't think so. Not like this. He never cared for her."

"Well, that was his business. I don't know anything about it."

"Nor I. But I have speculated."

"That doesn't get you far, does it?"

"Granted, it does not. I have not got far. There are three puzzling questions to ask about Johns Savage: why he married, why he left his money as he did, and—one other."

I looked up. His voice was odd.

"What other?"

He shook his head.

"Let's take them in order. First, why did he marry? We don't know. Second, why did he leave everything to her, knowing as he did"—he pounded the table softly with one closed hand and I stopped eating to watch him—"knowing as he did all that went on."

"Hush," I said quickly. "Let's not gossip."

"It is not gossip. It is fact. There was Charlie Hanely, there was Gordon, there was—"

"Hush," I said again.

"There were others that I knew about and Johns knew about."

"Apparently he did not."

"You know he did, but that he stood pat and shielded her. A man might do that, if—for—well, if the money were hers. But not in Johns' case. I have figured it that he realized it as development of the type he had chosen, that it was what must be expected from a woman with such eyes and manner."

"I don't know anything about women's eyes and manner," I said testily. "But we do no good by discussing John's domestic scheme now."

He seemed to be properly silenced. I wondered what he had meant by the three puzzling things about Johns Savage. He had mentioned but two—his marriage and his disposition of property. What was the other? I looked slantingly across at him and he spoke as if in answer to what was in my mind.

"No, we don't know why he married. We do know, though, that, with no semblance of love between them, he

forgot all else in providing for her. Was it—was it in expiation?"

"In expiation of what?" I demanded.

"I think I can tell you. But, first, do you want to know the third question in my mind about Johns?"

I just looked at him.

"The third question is—is he really dead?"

I felt the blood rush up from my throat, a sudden stoppage of my heart. But I was used to being jolted. It was my business. In a second, I put down my fork and said:

"You know the story of his death as well as I do."

"I was not down to see him off the night he sailed. You were, I believe."

He waited until I spoke.

"Yes, I was."

"You went with him to his stateroom."

"Yes. I did."

"He was not seen again. In the morning his bags had not been unstrapped, he was not on the ship, he had gone overboard during the evening or night, either by accident or intention."

I remained silent.

"Accident or intention," he repeated. "Which did you really think it was, Mr. Burrege?"

He did not wait for me to reply. Perhaps I was slow about it. I was still feeling crowded inside, foolishly so, for these were the words of a weaver of phantasies.

He went on steadily:

"Not accident. Not if you want to be reasonable. Nobody could have managed to fall overboard a night like that. Intentional. But where is the reason? A man does not do that without a reason, Mr. Burrege. Did you figure his reason? Do you say, as the rest have whispered, that it was because of his wife's peccadilloes; that he was tired of shielding her, that he wanted to get out from under? That

he dropped overboard because he had borne all he could?"

I had nothing ready to reply, and he talked on:

"I say that such a reason is absurd. A man does not commit suicide because of his wife, when her affairs have extended over a period of fifteen years. He is used to them by that time. They are old stories. No, my dear Mr. Burrege, no man commits suicide for an old story."

I let the guinea hen go by without touching it. I was angry at this young man, and I was something more than angry, something unnamed as yet.

"I say, Mr. Burrege, that he did not disappear by accident. I say it was not done because of his wife—not at that late day. So, I am wondering this: how long was he on board after you left him? Did he disappear early or late, far out, or close to the city?"

I met his eyes. He smiled triumphantly, and then leaned quite across the table and spoke slowly:

"Johns' yacht was in the lower bay that night. He was a strong swimmer."

"Poof!" I said at once. "Every one knows Johns' yacht was in the bay that night; every one knows he could swim. Nothing new there. But for argument—grant that it could be done, that he wanted to get away, wanted to give away his fortune—where is the reason? As you are so strong for reasons, my dear sir, get one for that."

"I have one."

I confess I was flustered and glad for the interruption of Fanny, who came to see how we were getting along. She attracted attention to our corner, and two or three people turned to look and make remarks about our seclusion. Conway bowed to some one out of my sight, and I wondered, from the steadiness of his gaze, if it was Alicia.

There was one thing about Conway: he did not pretend that I was not in

terested; he began again as soon as we were alone.

"Yes, I have a reason for you. Did Johns ever talk to you about his southern seas' trip, the time he was interested in rubber, or something—wasn't it rubber? Did he tell you about weeks that he spent among tropical islands down there? One, in particular, that looked like a silver piece as it lay on the water, so it was called—"

"'Argentina,'" I said, and nodded.

"Yes. You remember that he was there a long time? The sand of this island was like silver dust, he said; not only did its beaches shine like sheets of metal, but the trees beyond were—I forget what—the leaves were lined like our silver poplars, so that when the wind turned them over the whole island shone, and when the tide was out you could hardly look at it from sea."

The odd feeling inside me was getting worse; something tightened in my throat. I leaned forward, too, and spoke with my tongue untied.

"Yes, he told me. He met an Englishman who had lived there for years. Johns went up to his house on the mountain. It was a big place, the whole clearing roofed with the silvered trees. The house itself, once white, had mellowed in the heat until it was silver, too. From the edge of the veranda the ground dropped plumb. The bottom was not in sight, the trail up went through reedy grass, head high, same color. One day when it stormed a green cloud came down and put the reeds flat. The house was in the fog of it all day, and when it lifted and all was wet, it glittered so that he shaded his eyes. The natives called it 'Argentina.' I don't know the name the books have, nor the exact location—"

I stopped abruptly, because of the way he was looking at me.

"You talk fluently about it," he said. "That's the place. What else did he tell you?"

He should have known better than to speak to me like that. My mind closed all its apertures automatically. If Argentia had been around the corner and an admission fee charged, I could not have spoken of it again.

"Did he tell you of the girl—the old man's granddaughter?"

I shook my head.

"Story stuff, Conway. There was no girl on this island. The old man and the silver sand is all there is to this story, except the money Johns made."

Conway was not eating his salad.

"There was a girl, and her name was Diana. I saw her picture."

"What?"

"He was telling me one day of Argentina. He liked to talk about it, which was strange for him. I had noticed the difference in him after he came back. I am used to noting differences. In many ways he was not the same man. I don't know whether you noticed it, but I dare say you didn't."

I was impassive.

"I knew he had grown odd, but that day he was—human, and that was something Johns never was. While he talked, his hands clenched together. I knew it was more than rubber. I am not a student of human nature for nothing, Mr. Burrege, and after I had listened to him and watched him and wondered what in thunder he had been up against, I asked if he had any pictures of the place. He had some he had taken himself—beach, trail, house, and that sort of thing—and among them was one that he took out of my hand. It was of the house, and on the steps was a girl. I hardly saw it, but across the back, as he turned it over, was written, 'Diana.'

"Who's the ladybird?" I asked him. He said it was the granddaughter, and then he talked of other things. But I knew. And I knew, too, that if a thing like that gets hold of a man like Johns, it means something. Most fellows have



"Diana!" He gathered her up in both arms. I need not have hurried, for they were not seeing me.

a series of loves. He had never had one, and fires don't light up and scorch a face as his was scorched more than once in a lifetime. So, I have thought about this Diana girl and the disappearance and all. You may not know it, but sometimes love is an elemental thing which knows no curb."

"Nonsense," I said sharply. "Book life and real life are far apart. Put it into your verses, Conway, but don't tell it to me for fact."

"Well," he said, "I'm disappointed. I thought maybe you—the way in which he disappeared—his yacht in the bay, and Barlow, its captain, giving up his job and going away—"

"You mean that he jumped overboard at a certain point and hour, was picked up by his own craft, pensioned Barlow, and found a way to get to the silver island?"

He laughed slightly.

"I suppose I meant something like that. I have wanted to talk about this to you. I was fond of Johns," he ended, as if I wanted explanation.

Then he got up slowly, said something about not eating sweets, and walked away.

I sat alone. I flattened my apricot ice down with my spoon and looked at it.

Why was Conway so-wrought up? Why was he wanting to know so much? Whatever his reasons, it was not my business to add to his knowledge by telling of a day that I knew, a day when I had been talking with Johns, changed, as Conway had said; nervous, gripping of hands, troubled of eyes and mouth.

"How old must a man be before he ceases to be a fool?" he had asked me.

I thought he was questioning some new investments, and I was hastening to assure him when the doorknob rattled slightly, the door opened gradually. It was after hours. He looked up sharply.

A girl was clinging to the knob and looking at us. She was not a pretty girl, young and slight, eyes three or four shades of blue, but set too far apart. She had a dark, short skirt and stocky shoes under it, a hat tilted back, and a lot of anxious lines across her forehead. Not much of a girl to look at, even as the lines cleared away and red ran up from her throat clear to her eyes, making her look very alive. But not so much of a girl. I looked at Johns. Johns! Was it? I had often likened him to a priest, an ascetic. Not then! His eyes were afire, his head was up, and I did not know at all what the emotion was that tanged the one word he said.

"Diana!" That was it.

He sprang across the room. He gathered her up in both arms, so that her feet left the floor. I took the papers and made haste to get around the table and away. I need not have hurried, for they were not seeing me, although he had spoken only the one word and she had said only one word, too. Her word was, "Forever," and in it was that strange note like his, which I could not place.

He did not speak of it afterward, and I never saw her again. A few days later he told me he was going abroad on a business trip. I helped him clear up some outstanding matters and went down to the boat with him because he asked me. Alicia was not down. He showed me his stateroom and laughed like a boy. I said he was in great spirits and he laughed again and slapped my shoulder.

So it was a great shock to me when the word came of his accident.

Was it possible? Had he made up

to Alicia with all that he had and taken freedom? Was there a love strong enough to make a man give up fortune, friends, country? Was there a love strong enough in the heart of a girl to share a life into which no clergy entered? Conway had said there was. But Conway was a sentimental. I could flout the whole idea but for the memory of the grasp in his hand, the shine in his eyes that night when I left him. The hand grasp had life—life at its best, and strength that would chance anything. The shine in the eyes—well, it was more than a good-by to a stodgy old friend. Good God! I hoped it was true! I hoped with all my poor old soul that idiot Conway knew what he was talking about!

Fanny rustled around by me.

"Come on," she cried. "Come out and see people. Where's Conway? Oh, there he is with Alicia. Do you know, I hear he's really attentive to her. Wouldn't it be fine if—and he such a friend of Johns and all? It would be quite the decent and in-order things, if they should make it up together, wouldn't it?"

"Quite so," I rejoined.

"For he needs money, poor Conway."

"Verse makers do," I replied.

I came home. No, I don't believe it at all. It's absurd! But that hand-clasp and those eyes did not belong to a man who saw the end of life! And anything can be managed with money.

The thought grows and I find myself smiling. But why could he not let me know, though I could hardly expect him to drop a post card? It's a safe bet that Conway won't talk; he just wanted to see how much I knew. Funny world. I have not for a long time been so comfortable in my mind.

I could even go to Argentia some time, if it is out of the way. I wonder if he would like it if I did? I believe he would—this new Johns.





NEW YORK STAGE SUCCESSES



The Prince *and* the Pauper

A Dramatization of Mark Twain's immortal story, by Amelie Rives.

IN reviving a play which has been off the boards for thirty years, and which offers a vivid contrast to most of the recent stage successes, William Faversham has been guilty of originality. Originality is often punished in the box office. The obvious way to run a theater is first to determine which play is making the biggest success and then to put on another as closely resembling it as possible. This is the way of uninspired mediocrity and of moderate, but assured, commercial success. Any man with ordinary ability, good taste, and reasonable backing may have hope of a future this way.

To be original, however, asks more of a man. He must have some inward light, some inspiration that tells him what people are looking for; he must be ready to bet, not on things that are assured already, but on his own judgment and instincts. He must, moreover, have sound judgment and sounder

instincts. Most original things fail. They deserve to fail, for they generally have little to commend them save their originality.

It is a dangerous game, but it appeals to the man who believes in himself and in the public. Once in a while it succeeds. And when it does succeed, it does it brilliantly. Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln" scored one triumph, artistically and commercially. And now the bell has rung again for this old fairy tale of Mark Twain's, presented in new dramatic form.

"Why did I select 'The Prince and the Pauper?'" said Faversham in a recent interview. "The world is dreadfully ill, and, as I see it, the best way to get out of these moral doldrums is to strike for the open seas of adventure, where men may rejoice in the high spirits of a cause worth dying for. Let's orientate and take a sight on the old landmarks in life and art. Let's

By Courtesy of William Faversham, and of Lee Shubert, Producer.



Mistress Canty (Mary Rehan)

Nan Canty (Madeleine King)

Tom Canty (Ruth Findlay)

MRS. CANTY: Angels and archangels protect us! I see two of ye—two of ye—yet the same!

Two Toms I see—and one is habited in rags—and one is clad in king's vestments—two lads—different, yet the same!

get back to the things that make for manhood.

"I have always loved the story of 'The Prince and the Pauper.' It has a universal appeal. I believe that what men and women need to-day is the tender beauty and charm that lies in this romance of Mark Twain's. I believe in the effectual power of a character like Miles Hendon, the champion of the little prince disguised in rags. In the closing speech of Miss Rives' dramatic

version, the young Edward turns to his court and says: 'My lords and gentlemen, while you have trained me to be a king, Miles Hendon has taught me to be a man.' Could there be a finer tribute?"

Thus, Mr. Faversham off the stage. On the stage, he is no more Mr. Faversham, but Miles Hendon himself, back from the wars, shabby yet gallant, swaggering yet kindly and courteous, ruined yet carrying with him the airs

of optimism. Robbed of his estates in Kent by a younger brother, the girl he has loved apparently lost forever, Hendon has still humor and sympathy to spare for others. Here is a refreshing hero who is no egoist, whose high spirits are the flower of unselfishness. There is a "wild civility" in his rusty clothes, a flashing chivalry in his bright rapier.

The action of Mark Twain's romance extends over weeks or months. In this play, which was written by Amelie Rives from an earlier dramatic version by Abby Sage Richardson, a day or so suffices. It is the old tale of the double identity, but here it is two children who look alike, not two grown men. Mark Twain was a man of genius. In every work of such a man there is something written between the lines, overtones, touches of thought and sentiment that are not plainly set forth but have an even more haunting effect than if they were. The pitiable evils that men do in ignorance, the injustice of the law, the horrors, as well as the glamours, of the past

are all suggested in the play no less than in the story.

And so, before the curtain goes up, we slip back three hundred and seventy years or so into history. Henry the Eighth, he of the many wives, has about outlived his reign and usefulness. He has played his part in the Reformation, turning church lands into crown lands



Prince Edward (Ruth Findlay) reprobates the guard and tells him to bring the boy to his private chamber.



"Long live the king!"

or handing them over to his nobles and turning the priests out of doors. He has done something else no less disturbing. He has turned hundreds of small farms into sheep walks. An industrial revolution has been taking place in England. Thousands out of employment and homeless wander the roads in bands as highwaymen and beggars. Merry England is not so merry after all. London, compared to a modern city, is a small place with a hundred thousand or so inhabitants. And yet the problem of overcrowding seems to have been even worse then than it is now, the housing problem even more acute. Surely no modern tenement could offer a more sordid, narrow, and unwholesome dwelling than Tom Canty's house in Offal Court. Here Tom Canty, with a fond mother and sister and a brutal father, has lived most of his thirteen years, an imaginative, gentle, intelligent being, flowering in the midst of indescribable squalor, picking up an education from one of the poor priests whom the royal Henry, following his quarrel with the pope, has turned out into the world. Tom

was born on the same day as Henry's son, who is to be the boy king, Edward the Sixth. The only pleasure the child has is in his imagination, and so his mind plays with this idea of himself and the little prince—and sometimes he pretends that he is the prince himself. But let the curtain go up, and let us see his home in Offal Court.

A bare, squalid room with a window and door opening on a narrow alley without. John Canty, a dark, ruffianly type, given to drink and oaths and blows, is arguing with his wife and their daughter Nan. Tom should be home and is not. Mrs. Canty is pleading with her man, hoping to save the boy a beating on his return.

MRS. CANTY: He's gone to the baker's for a loaf, husband. He'll be back straightway.

CANTY: To the baker's, say you? He'll be at his old tricks by the way—playing prince to the neighborhood, I'll warrant him!

NAN: And I'm sure if any one could play prince, it's Tom. Wasn't he born on the same day as Prince Edward, and doesn't he get a bright shilling and a

new jerkin every first of October for being born on that day? And isn't he the handsomest boy in all Offal Court? And so full of sense! Father Andrews, who once saw the prince close at hand, says that Tom is his living image were he but dressed in clothes like the prince.

CANTY: Curse Father Andrews!

MRS. CANTY: Don't be hard on the poor priest. He has been a rare friend to Tom. And he taught him the blessed reading, and to write, and his Latin, as well.

CANTY: Curse him for that all the more, teaching the brat stuff to set him above his own kin and his lawful father! Do I write? Do I read? Do I look as if I knew the Latin or any beastly tongue of that sort? I'll to the baker's and find him.

MRS. CANTY: Oh, I pray you, do not beat him! Let him go this time. He shall play prince no more.

CANTY: I'll prince him! I'll teach him how I can write in blue ink on his skin, the lazy dog—see if I don't! (He rushes out.)

Presently, from the opposite direction, comes a shouting, and finally a group of boys bearing stripped willow wands, some walking backward be-

fore young Tom Canty and others following, cheering and hailing him as Prince Tom. Tom, a fair, straight, slender boy in rags, dismisses them at the door and turns to find his mother in tears. Both she and Nan hurry toward him and urge him to run for his life. They ask him if he has brought the bread. He has given it away to the boys who were so hungry. Their terror increases. Mrs. Canty, who is a psychic, goes into a sort of trance. She stares at Tom's palm and his face with strange eyes and speaks in a strange voice.

MRS. CANTY: Angels and archangels protect us! I see two of ye—two of ye—yet the same! Two Toms I see—and one is habited in rags—and one is clad in king's vestments—two lads—different, yet the same!

Tom is frightened and ready to go. He offers his mother a little silver cross which Father Andrews has given him and is pressing it upon her when his father appears, a sinister figure of drunken and murderous savagery. He strikes at Nan and prepares to give his little son a beating. Mrs. Canty, still in a trance, confronts him.

MRS. CANTY: I see a rope about your neck, the



The Princess Elizabeth (Clare Eames).



Miles Hendon (William Faversham).

hangman's knot below your ear—a noose, a hangman's noose, around your neck. I see it, I see it!"

Hugh, a friend of Canty's, enters the room.

HUGH: Canty, the beaks are after you. The constables are on your track. The priest is dead. You killed him.

MRS. CANTY (*continuing in her trance*): The hangman's noose is round your neck! Get down into this trap ere the hangman's trap gape for you!

Canty is frightened out of his drunken ferocity. He releases Tom and opens a trapdoor in the floor.

CANTY: I'll go straight to the rogues'



Mistress Margery Mallow (Harda Daube).



The little king falls back, fainting.

nest in Southwark. Pack your duds and meet me there.

He disappears and the trapdoor closes above him. For the time being at least, Tom is saved.

This little picture of sordid poverty, of youthful aspiration, of heavy brutality, is a glimpse at one side of sixteenth-century England—the uglier side.

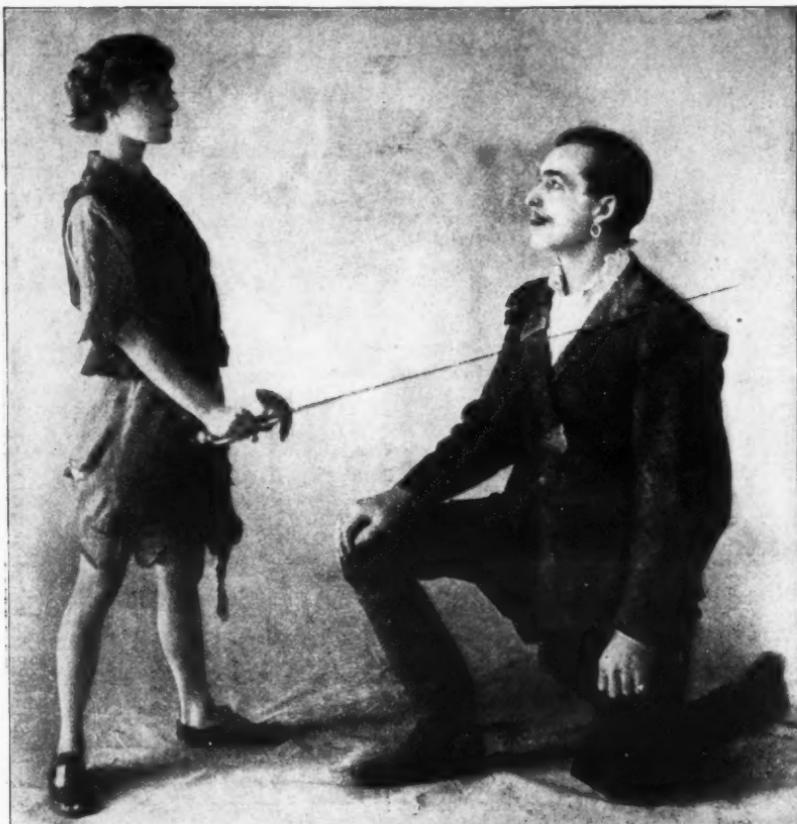
The curtain rises again upon the pageantry and color of the court. We see the gardens of the Palace of Westminster, the iron gates, and the far view beyond them. Here are armed sentinels and ladies of the court, Elizabeth, young Edward's sister, some day to be the great queen, and Margery, the lady-in-waiting, who loves the lost Miles Hendon. The king is far gone in his

last illness, and no one may see him, but here is young Prince Edward, fencing with Seymour. There is the noise of a rabble of boys outside the gates and the voices of the guards who disperse them. A guard strikes at one of the boys. Edward checks him and tells him to bring the boy to his private chamber. He withdraws, and Ralph Hendon, the brother of the absent Miles, a smirking, artificial fop, is left alone with Margery. He begs her to be kind to him.

MARGERY: Why should I be kind to you? You, that murdered your brother, Miles Hendon! Did you not murder him and slip into his shoon?

RALPH: No, indeed, verily. He died of a curse Saracen sickness in Tripoli.

MARGERY: Why, then, would you



The king knights Miles Hendon.

suffer none to look upon his corse when he was in his coffin?

RALPH: La! Do not ask me.

MARGERY: Can you not answer?

RALPH: An' you will have it, take it. A long voyage had he come in his coffin, mistress, even from far Tripoli. (*He shrugs his shoulders meaningfully and speaks a word or two in Latin.* MARGERY exits, followed by RALPH.)

A moment later Edward, the prince, appears, transformed, clad in the rags of poor Tom Carty. He is enjoying the freedom of these strange garments

when one of the guards sees him and takes him for the ragged boy. He mocks the guard, fights with him, and is finally thrown out of the gates. The resemblance between the prince and the pauper has deceived the guard, as it deceives every one else in the play. And now the prince is thrown out in rags into a world much more cruel, brutal, harsh, superstitious, and stupid than anything we know.

Meanwhile, news comes that the king is dying, and a little later the still more alarming news that the young prince

seems to have lost his mind and sits cowering in a corner of his private chamber, which he cannot be induced to leave. Of course it is Tom Canty, dressed in the clothes of royalty, who cowers and is afraid, and not without reason. Finally he steps forth, a pitiful figure of fright. He drops on his knees before the Princess Elizabeth, begging her protection, and she in a burst of real affection tries to raise him to his feet. The Earl of Hertford appears.

HERTFORD: The king is dead.

TOM CANTY: What king?

Hertford salutes him as the new king.

HERTFORD: Your sacred majesty, my liege, Edward the Sixth, King of England.

ALL: God save the king!

And now, with Tom Canty on the throne and Edward Tudor in rags, the scene shifts. We see a dark street of old London, gloomy and bizarre. Hugh and others of John Canty's gang slouch past. Finally the prince appears, surrounded by a hooting mob of boys. Edward has the Tudor courage and fights gallantly with his torment-

tors. Miles Hendon, who has just returned from Tripoli, and is living in lodgings near by, watches him from a window.

EDWARD: I am the prince! Down on your knees and do reverence to my sacred person.

He is beating off the boys when Hendon appears. He carries a drawn ra-



Mad Anthony (Cecil Yapp) and the young king, in the old barn at Southwark.

pier which gleams like silver. The gang of hoodlums shrink back before its menacing point.

HENDON: Bravissimo! Miles Hendon's with you. The odds be evener now. Come on! Come on!

But Hugh and others of Carty's friends who have joined the boys do not like the sight of the naked steel point which seems to be pointing everywhere at once.

EDWARD (*deeply moved*): Sir, I thank you. I'll ne'er forget you.



Hendon and the little king become great friends.

HENDON: Why set on this lad?

HUGH: He saith he be the king's son. He saith he is Prince Edward. It is treason.

Hendon turns questioningly to the boy in rags.

EDWARD: I am Prince Edward.

Hendon scatters coins among the boys.

EDWARD: The king, my father, shall reward you.

HENDON: By the crown of Malta, under which I fought two years at Tripoli, an you be not the Prince of England, you are certainly the Prince of Gratitude!

John Carty appears and tries to seize the boy, but Hendon hits him with the flat of his sword and drives him about the stage with the point. Tom's mother and sister join the group and recognize the boy, but Edward drives them off.

EDWARD: I am your liege prince.

A CROWD OF CITIZENS (*shouting*): Long live the king! The king is dead. Long live our boy king, Edward the Sixth!

HENDON (*turning to the ragged boy, to whom the cries are a cruel mockery*): Where is your home?

EDWARD: You are a good fellow and a gentleman

born, I am sure of that. Take me to the palace. You will be well rewarded there. I am Edward, the Prince of Wales. Also, I fear I am the King of England, if it be true that my father is dead.

HENDON: Hush, hush, boy! Your madness is of a sort that may put both our necks in danger. Hush! But, mad or not mad, you shall find a friend in me.

The little king falls back, fainting. Hendon gathers him up in his strong arms and carries him into the house. Hugh and Canty watch them from the background.

Within the house, in the plain lodgings of Miles Hendon, the king recovers consciousness and complains of a strange, hollow feeling. Hendon decides that in a common person, not a king, this hollow feeling would be known as hunger, and sets out a supper. But there is more trouble for Hendon. The king must wash and Hendon must hold the basin for him. When the king eats, Hendon must not sit down, but must wait upon him. In a whimsical, tolerant humor, poor Hendon indulges the strange vagaries of this mad boy. Misfortune has not hardened his heart or spoiled his good spirits. He and the king fall into a conversation and Hendon tells his story. His brother Ralph has robbed him of



Tom Canty is appalled at the list of household expenses and the fact that the King of England is in debt.

his estates and proclaimed that he has died of the fever in Tripoli. A coffin, supposed to contain his body, has been sent home. His sweetheart, Margery, is a ward of the king and a lady-in-waiting at court. Ralph hopes to marry her. And in the meantime Miles Hendon is landless and without standing, unable to persuade any one that he is not an impostor. He and the little king become great friends. They fence together. The king promises to right Hendon's wrongs. He knights him, and finally, at Hendon's request, gives him the right to sit in his presence. Miles Hendon has the right way with children, which is to take them seriously, not to mock them, but to treat them as equals.



Miles Hendon is startled by *Tom Carty's* resemblance to the boy he has befriended.

Finally the king calls for pen, ink, and paper, and writes a letter to the Lord Chancellor which he asks Hendon to deliver for him. He is tired, and at last falls asleep. Hendon tucks him up on the couch in his room and, noticing the thin rags that cover him, decides to take some of the little money he has left to buy him new clothes. Scarcely has he left the room on this errand when Hugh appears. He wakes the king and urges him to go with him, telling him that his friend Hendon has been wounded in a street fight and has sent for him. The king, concerned about the plight of his new friend, goes out with Hugh. Edward Tudor is in the hands of his enemies.

And now we are to get still another scene out of the old England into which Shakespeare was born, the rough, the brutal, the picturesque England. The curtain goes up on a thieves' den in Southwark. It is a huge old barn, the loft and the stairs leading up to it plainly visible, with a break in the roof of the loft, through which one may see the sky. This is the place where Nan and Mrs. Carty are to meet John, and in this barn Seymour and the Princess Elizabeth, who have been riding in the country, have taken refuge from a shower. They are about to leave when Mrs. Carty offers to tell their fortunes. Looking at Elizabeth's hand, she falls

into her usual trance.

MRS. CANTY: Long life, great riches, great power—you have known prison bars and rightful hopes denied. A light gathers! A crown! You will be queen! (She takes the hand of Seymour and speaks again.) Two hearts! A man in scarlet! The headsman, with his ax!

Seymour is angry and is threatening the woman, promising to send officers to investigate the den, when Hugh enters with the little prince. The ragged Edward rushes to Elizabeth, calling her sister. Mrs. Canty draws him back while Sey-

mour urges the princess to go. The shrewd Elizabeth is troubled in her mind. She sees the resemblance this waif bears to the king. She remembers the strange madness which afflicted the little king that morning at Westminster. She finally departs, promising to have the matter searched to the core.

John Canty enters, accompanied by Mad Anthony, a grotesque, horrible figure of human misery, gray-haired and ragged.

CANTY
(mocking
MAD ANTHONY):
My brat is
no mad-

*Edward
Tudor
back on
the throne.*



der than you are! He thinks he is king!

MAD ANTHONY: Laugh, Canty, laugh! Once I, too, could laugh. Now I can only drink to drown sorrow. I had a farm of my own once—had a merry wife and two pretty chicks. Drink to 'em, coves, as I do! They're in heaven now, for the King of England has seized our farm to make a royal sheep walk and we are driven out to beg. Then they beat my wife for begging—at the cart's tail—till she fell dead. Drink to the just laws that beat an honest lass to death because she could not starve meekly!

There are groans from a motley crowd of thieves and beggars who have gathered in the old barn. They pass cans around and drink, Anthony deepest of all.

MAD ANTHONY (*continuing*): When I went begging, the law cropped off my ears; and when I begged still, they branded me. Drink to the king's good law which made me beggar, then slave, and last, what I am now, a drunken rogue! Drink to the king's fair, leafless tree, the gallows, whereon I shall one day hang!

EDWARD (*interrupting him, royally*): No, you shall not hang. An there be such cruel laws, I will end them. I am your king—I am Edward of England.

Canty rushes at the boy in brutal fury, and would kill him were it not for the intervention of some of the women. The crowd of thieves surround the boy, mocking him, finally setting him on a barrel with a stick for a scepter and a wisp of straw for a crown.

EDWARD: Poor, ignorant souls! I think upon your wrongs, not upon your insults. One who is as far above me as the sun is above this dark earth was used as you are using me.* Yet he forgave them, as I forgive you, poor,

unhappy ones that know not what you do.

They draw away from him, leaving the barn. Edward is left alone with Mad Anthony. He tells Anthony he is the true son of Henry the Eighth, swearing it by the host of heaven.

MAD ANTHONY: Then, by the host of hell, I swear ye had better not been born! Make your peace with God, son of Henry!

He strikes Edward and the boy falls senseless. Anthony binds and gags him, and has just carried him up the rickety stairs to the loft when Hendon bursts in the door.

Anthony, with a madman's cunning, tells Hendon that the boy he seeks is not there. He has almost persuaded him when the boy sobs from the loft above. Almost at the same instant the crew of thieves return, surrounding Hendon.

Miles Hendon is at bay, fighting for his life. His sword flashes here and there, drawing a charmed circle about him, but the thieves press in closer and closer, afraid of his deadly rapier but determined on his death. Meanwhile the prince breaks free from his bonds in the loft above and drops out through the opening in the roof. He returns with a body of soldiers just in time to save his friend. Mad Anthony, from the stairs to the loft, has leaped upon Hendon's back and borne him to the ground. Hendon has been bound and is about to be hanged when the prince and the soldiers he has found burst into the barn. All the outlaws are placed under arrest.

In the meantime, the real Tom Canty has recovered from his fears and reconciled himself somewhat to the position of King of England, a position which he does not altogether enjoy. We see him in a hall in the palace of Westminster, appalled at the list of household expenses and the fact that the King of England is in debt. He puzzles



The king gives *Hendon* title and estates, and confirms his right to sit in the royal presence.

his advisers by his ignorance as to the whereabouts of the great seal which the real prince had in his possession. He has just bestowed the hand of Margery on Ralph Hendon when the noise of a tumult outside attracts his atten-

tion. A witch is about to be burned by the mob. Tom, exercising his kingly prerogative, orders her brought before him. The woman is his mother.

Almost at the same instant, Hendon is admitted, bearing the letter from the

real king. The handwriting is recognized, and when Miles Hendon describes where the king has hidden the great seal, the chancellor is convinced that Tom Canty is just plain Tom Canty, and that Edward Tudor is King of England.

The story is almost at the end. The king is back upon the throne, the pauper kneeling as a suppliant before him. Miles and his sweetheart are reunited, and Ralph is banished from England. The king gives Hendon title and estates, and confirms his right to sit in the royal presence. Tom Canty and his mother and sister are to be provided for. One feels that little Edward will be a better king for his adventure.

To give any adequate idea of the color, the feeling, the movement of the performance is difficult. It has, in its court scenes, the convincing and stirring pageantry of one of Shakespeare's histories. Moreover, Mark Twain's novel has not suffered in the dramatization. The spirit of the book has been carried over into the play—the gallantry, the humor, the sweet and human wisdom. Miles Hendon is that rare, rare thing in romance, a hero who is actually lovable. His gallantry, his cheerfulness, his tenderness, and, above all, his misfortunes, cast a glamour about him. The production as a whole is memorable and significant.

It is at once the glory and the despair of the theater that it can be all things to all men. One generation has seen it pass through various metamorphoses, not all of them lovely. The old

comedy and melodrama of trite situation and hackneyed *cliché* faded out before the dank realism of Ibsen. Barrie and Shaw helped to make it a pleasanter place, but on the whole, for a long time, the tendency seemed to be toward the disagreeable. *Camilles* and *Mrs. Tanquerays*, eternal triangles, problem plays, and finally plays of out-and-out crime made the atmosphere more and more grim and earthy. Recently we have been coming back to the sane joy of things. Realism was an arresting novelty, unpleasant frankness startled us into attention, but neither kept their promise of better things. It looks as if the sun were beginning to shine out again, and this performance of Faversham and his company is one of the brightest of its rays.

Romance, as well as realism, may give us food for thought. It is not easy to forget Tom Canty and the little prince. Somehow it seems as if it all must have happened. Anyway, it should have happened.

What did Mark Twain set down as an introduction to his "tale for young people of all ages?"

"I will set down a tale as it was told to me by one who had it of his father, which latter had it of *his* father, this last having in like manner had it of *his* father—and so on, back and still back, three hundred years and more, the fathers transmitting it to the sons and so preserving it. It may be history, it may be only a legend, a tradition. It may have happened, it may not have happened, but it *could* have happened."









Blue Laws for Girls

HERE are two ways of looking at law. The theory that was adopted for many years in this country as well as in England, where it originated, was that law was for the protection of a man's liberty, for the safeguarding of property, and for the protection of his right to do what he pleased with that property. Crimes were against the person and against property. They were not crimes because they were morally wrong. They were crimes because they interfered with the peace and liberty of the citizens of the state. It was the state which instituted the suit against the offender, not the individual.

The other way of looking at the law is that it is enacted to make people good and to make them behave for their own good. If high-heel shoes are bad for a girl's health, what can be simpler than passing a law making it a punishable misdemeanor to wear them? If every one would be better in health by going to bed at ten o'clock every night and immediately turning out the light, why waste time trying to persuade people to do the sensible thing when it is so much simpler and more direct to make them do it? What are the police for, anyhow? Some of our Puritan forefathers believed in this theory of blue laws. Some of them, by no means the less respectable ones, did not and were not afraid to say so. William Bradford, governor of the Plymouth Colony, who wrote the still-interesting history of the settlement, was among the latter.

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There are two objections to the blue-law theory. People have different ideas as to what is foolish and a waste of time. The lady who stands up for hours to hear "Tristan," and is a wreck the next day, thinks that the man with the brown derby who shouts himself hoarse at a baseball game is a vulgar clown and that baseball is a waste of time and ought to be suppressed. She sees the space given to it in the papers and the crowds at the bulletin boards and thinks that there ought to be a law against it. What the opinion of the hoarse man with the brown derby is in regard to grand opera we forbear to print. This is a magazine for the home. And yet they are both good citizens and have the vote. The other objection is that blue laws are so hard to enforce. It would be difficult to make men stop baseball. It would be almost impossible to stop girls from wearing high heels. We had one civil war. Isn't that enough?

If you believe there ought to be a law preventing girls from dining with men, unchaperoned, in cabarets, read "Phyllis and the Bright Lights," by Arthur Tuckerman. If you think girls who can't sing ought to be stopped from spending their money on foreign music teachers, read "The Tongue-Tied Muse," by Philip Merivale. If you are in doubt about blue laws but are sure that you like good stories, read "Undercurrents," by Katherine Haviland Taylor; "The Prescription," by Arthur Crabb; or "S. Weinstein's Special," by R. O'Grady. All these things appear in the next number of SMITH'S.

*A brief synopsis of the opening chapters of
MARGARET PEDLER'S LATEST NOVEL*

The Lamp of Destiny

A WHOLLY charming bit of femininity, Magda Vallincourt, a professional dancer, breaks hearts easily and unfeelingly. Her mother, embittered by her husband's unjust repudiation of her, had early taught her daughter to take, but never to give, affection and love, and this becomes for Magda her code of life. Once, as a child, after a severe punishment by her father, Magda had gone to dance the ache away in the woods. An artist, Michael Quarrington, at work there, had glimpsed her, and was enchanted by her whimsical grace. And, grown to young womanhood, though she has never seen Quarrington again, he alone of all the men Magda has known stands out—"Saint Michael," as she had dubbed him at their first meeting. Then, one day, after an accident to her motor car, she is taken by her rescuer to his home near by. He recognizes her as the far-famed dancer, the Great Wielitzka—Magda uses her mother's name in her profession. Over the teacups he arraigns her unflinchingly for the havoc she has wrought in men's lives. She listens, piqued that he should offer frank denunciation instead of the customary male worship. Discussing virtue and its relation to art, he tells her of a little child whom he had once seen dancing in the woods, the perfect embodiment, to him, of innocence and artistic achievement. Immediately Magda recognizes him as "Saint Michael," but only when she is leaving does she reveal to him that she is his "little sprite of the woods." And in his cry "You! You!" as she drives away, there is an infinitude of wistful yearning.

Arrived at home, Magda tells the story of the accident and rescue to Gillian, her companion and chaperon. Gillian, all too aware of the trend of affairs in Magda's life, is greatly disturbed. But her kindly counsel to the girl avails naught. A day or two later, as the result of a stormy demonstration of his love for her, which Magda resents, she and her accompanist, Antoine Davilof, sever their professional connections. On the opening night of one of Magda's great successes, Lady Arabella, her godmother, entertains a box party. Included in it is Michael Quarrington, whom she considers highly eligible as a husband for Magda. That night she detects his interest in the girl, and promptly plans a dinner party.

At this party Michael and Magda have a touching scene together in which she pleads with him to believe in her, and he refrains from an open declaration of love only with great difficulty. That night Magda receives a note of farewell from Kit Raynham, one of her devoted admirers. The papers loudly announce his disappearance, hinting at the cause of his desperate state. Kit's mother, broken-hearted, calls on Magda, and upbraids her for wrecking her boy's promising career.

Several days later, Lady Arabella adds her word of denunciation, yielding the final blow when she tells Magda that Quarrington has left England, his only word for her being the terse message that "she will understand" why he has gone.

Troubled in spirit, Magda decides on a quiet summer in the country with Gillian and the latter's small son, Coppertop. She engages rooms with a young farmer, Dan Storran, and his wife, June, a timid, conscientious girl. Magda's fascination soon ensnares Dan Storran, and his little wife, aware of the situation, is miserable. Gillian does her utmost to comfort her, but Magda pursues her ruthless course. Then, one day, Davilof appears unexpectedly. Very casually he reports the fact that Quarrington has married a Spanish woman, his model. Magda, inwardly shaken, maintains her composure. Meanwhile, Davilof, though he does not stay long, realizes that Magda is slowly wrecking the little household, and, to strengthen his own case against her and urge her to accept him, he tells her his observations. Magda is, of course, incensed. Then, to add to her sense of outrage, Storran asks her to leave Stockleigh because she is coming between him and his wife. Unable to sleep that night, Magda goes to the garden and, inspired by the moonlight, dances. Storran, sitting in an obscure corner, brooding, is overcome by her beauty. He rushes to her, crushes her in his arms, and madly tells her of his love.

The next morning, Magda and Gillian and Coppertop leave for London; and Storran, after confessing to his wife his mad love for Magda, leaves her—to go he knows not where. At Lady Arabella's country house Magda again meets Quarrington. The report of his marriage had been a mistake. After much persuasion she consents to sit for a portrait—a "Circe" he proposes to do.

The Lamp of Destiny

By Margaret Pedler

Author of "The Hermit of Far End," "The House of Dreams-Come-True," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

The Greatest Novel of the Year

CHAPTER XXII.

MAGDA glanced from the divan, covered with a huge tiger skin, to Michael, wheeling his easel into place. A week's hard work on the part of the artist had witnessed the completion of Lady Arabella's portrait, and to-day he proposed to make some preliminary sketches for the "Circe."

Magda felt oddly nervous and unsure of herself. This last fortnight, passed in daily companionship with Quarrington, had proved a considerable strain. Notwithstanding that she had consented to sit for his picture of Circe, he had not deviated from the attitude which he had apparently determined upon from the first moment of her arrival at "The Hermitage," an attitude of aloof indifference, to which was added a bitterness of speech which continually thrust at her with its trenchant cynicism.

It was as if he had erected a high wall between them which Magda found no effort of hers could break down, and she was beginning to ask herself whether he could ever really have cared for her at all. Surely no man who had once cared could be so hard, so implacably hard!

And now, alone with him in the big room which had been converted into a temporary studio, she found herself overwhelmed by a feeling of intense self-consciousness. She felt it would be im-

possible to bear the coolly neutral gaze of those gray eyes for hours at a time. She wished fervently that she had never consented to sit for the picture.

"How do you want me to pose?" she inquired at last, endeavoring to speak with her usual detachment, and conscious that she was failing miserably. "You haven't told me yet."

He laughed a little.

"I haven't the least intention of telling you," he replied. "The Wielitzska" doesn't need advice as to how to pose."

Magda looked at him uncertainly.

"But you've given me no idea of what you want," she protested. "I must have some idea to start from!"

"I want a recumbent Circe," he vouchsafed at last. "Hence the divan. Here is the goblet"—he held it out—"supposed to contain the fatal potion which transformed men into swine. I leave the rest to you. You posed very successfully for me some years ago, without my issuing any stage directions! Afterward, you played the part of a youthful Circe, I remember. You should," he went on more caustically, "be more experienced now."

She flushed under the cool, satirical tone. It seemed as if he neglected no opportunity of impressing on her the poor estimation in which he held her. Her thoughts flew back to a sunlit glade in a wood and to the gray-eyed, boyish-

The story began in the December number.

looking painter who had kissed her and called her "Witch child!"

"You—you were kinder in those days," she said suddenly. She made a few steps toward him and stood looking up at him, her hands hanging loosely clasped in front of her, like a penitent schoolgirl.

"Saint Michael." At the sound of her old childish name for him he winced. "Saint Michael, I don't think I can sit for you if—if you're going to be unkind. I thought I could, but—but," helplessly, "I can't!"

"Unkind?" he muttered.

"Yes," she said desperately. "Since I came here you've said a good many hard things to me. I—I dare say I've deserved them. But"—smiling up at him rather wanly—"it isn't always easy to accept one's deserts." She paused, then spoke quickly: "Couldn't we, while we're here together, behave like friends? Just friends? It's only for a short time."

His face had whitened while she was speaking. He was silent for a little and his hand, grasping the side of the big easel, slowly tightened its grip till the knuckles showed white like bone. At last he answered her.

"Very well. Friends, then! So be it."

Impulsively she held out her hand. He took it in his and held it a moment, looking down at its slim whiteness. Then he bent his head and she felt his lips hot against her soft palm.

A little shaken, she drew away from him and moved toward the divan. She paused beside it and glanced down reflectively at the goblet she still carried in her hand, mentally formulating her conception of Circe before she posed. An instant later and her voice roused Quarrington from the momentary reverie into which he had fallen.

"How would this do?"

He looked up, and as his gaze absorbed the picture before him an eager

light of pure æsthetic satisfaction leaped into his eyes.

"Hold that!" he exclaimed quickly. "Don't move, please!" And, snatching up a stick of charcoal, he began to sketch rapidly with swift, sure strokes.

The pose she had assumed was matchless. She was half sitting, half lying on the divan, the swathing draperies of her tunic outlining the wonderful modeling of her limbs. The upper part of her body, twisting a little from the waist, was thrown back as she leaned upon one arm, hand pressed palm downward on the tiger skin. In her other hand she held a golden goblet, proffering the fatal draft, and her tilted face with its strange, enigmatic smile and narrowed lids held all the seductive entreaty and beguilement, and the deep, cynical knowledge of mankind, which are the garnering of the Circes of this world.

At length Quarrington laid down his charcoal.

"It's a splendid pose," he said enthusiastically. "That sideways bend you've given to the body—it's wonderful! But can you stand it, do you think? Of course, I'll give you rests as often as I can, but even so, it will be a very trying pose to hold."

Magda sat up, letting her feet slide slowly over the edge of the divan. The "feet of Aurora" some one had once called them—white and arched, with rosy-tipped toes curved like the petals of a flower.

"I can hold it for a good while, I think," she answered evasively.

She did not tell him that even to her trained muscles the preservation of this particular pose, with its sinuous twist of the body, was likely to prove somewhat of a strain. If the pose was so exactly what he wanted for his Circe, he should have it, whatever the cost to herself.

And, without knowing it, yielding to an impulse which she hardly recognized, Magda had taken the first step along the



"I didn't think you wanted to marry me at all!" returned Magda. "I thought you—you disapproved of me too much."

pathway of service and sacrifice trodden by those who love.

"It seems as though you were destined to be the model of my two 'turning-point' pictures," commented Quarrington some days later, during one of the intervals when Magda was taking a brief rest. "It was the 'Repose of Titania' which first established my reputation, you know."

"But this can't be a 'turning point,'" objected Magda. "When you've reached the top of the pinnacle of fame,

so to speak, there isn't any 'turning point'—unless"—laughing—"you're going to turn round and climb down again!"

"There's no top to the pinnacle of work, of achievement," he answered quietly. "At least, there shouldn't be. One just goes on, slipping back a bit, sometimes, then scrambling on again." His glance returned to the picture and Magda watched the ardor of the creative artist light itself anew in his eyes. "That," he said nodding toward the can-

vas, "is going to be the best bit of work I've ever done."

"What made you—what made you choose Circe as the subject?" she asked uncertainly.

His face clouded over.

"The experience of a friend of mine."

Magda caught her breath.

"Not—you don't mean—"

"Oh, no," he said, divining her thought, "not the friend of whom you know—who loved a dancer! She hurt him," he went on, looking at her significantly, "but she didn't injure him to that extent. Circe turned men into swine, you remember. He was too fine a character for her to spoil like that."

"I'm glad." Magda spoke very low, her head bent. She felt unable to meet his eyes. After a short silence she asked: "Then what inspired—this picture?"

Was it some woman episode which had occurred while he was abroad, which had scored those new lines on his face, embittering the mouth and implanting that sternly sad expression in the gray eyes? She must know. At all hazards, she must know!

Quarrington lit a cigarette.

"It's not a pretty story," he remarked harshly.

Magda glanced toward the picture. The enchanting, tilted face smiled at her from the canvas, faintly derisive.

"Tell it to me," was all she said.

"There's very little to tell," he answered briefly. "There was a man and his wife—and another woman. Till the latter came along they were absolutely happy together, sufficient unto each other. The other woman was one of the Circe type and she broke the man—broke him utterly. I happened to be in Paris at the time and he came to see me there on his way out to South America. He'd left his wife, left his work—everything! Just *quit*! Since then I believe Frisco has seen more of him than

any other place. A man I know ran across him there and told me he'd gone under—utterly."

"And the wife?"

"Dead," he replied shortly. "She'd no heart to go on living—no wish to. She died when their first child was born, a few months after her husband had left her."

Magda uttered a stifled cry of pity, but Quarrington seemed not to hear it.

"That woman—the tertium quid—was a twentieth-century Circe." He paused. Then he added with grim conviction: "There's no forgiveness for a woman like that!"

"Ah! Don't say that!"

The words broke impulsively from Magda's lips. The recollection of the summer she had spent at Stockleigh rushed over her accusingly, and she realized that actually she had come between Dan Storran and his wife very much as the Circe woman of Michael's story had come between some other husband and wife.

A deep compassion for that unknown woman surged up within her. Surely her burden of remorse must be almost more than she could endure! And Magda, to whom penalties and consequences had hitherto been but very unimportant factors with which she concerned herself as little as possible, was all at once conscious of an intense thankfulness that she had not been thus punished, that she had quitted Stockleigh, leaving husband and wife still together. Together, they would find the way back into each other's hearts!

"Don't say that!" she repeated imploringly. "It sounds so hard—so relentless!"

"I don't think," said Michael, with a grim laugh, "that it is a case for relenting. But I oughtn't to have told you about it. After all, neither the husband nor wife were friends of yours. And you're looking quite upset over it. I didn't imagine," he went on, regarding

her with puzzled eyes, "that you were so easily moved to sympathy."

She looked away. Of late she had been puzzled herself at the new and unwanted emotions which stirred her.

"I don't think—I used to be," she said at last, uncertainly.

"Well," he said quizzically, "please don't take the matter too much to heart or you won't be able to assume the personality of Circe again when you've rested. I don't want to paint the picture of a model of propriety!"

It seemed as if he were anxious to restore the conversation to a lighter vein, and Magda responded gladly.

"I'm quite rested now. Shall I pose again?" she suggested a few minutes later.

Michael assented and, picking up his palette, began squeezing out fresh, shining little worms of paint on to it while Magda reassumed her pose. For a while he chatted intermittently, but presently he fell silent, becoming more and more deeply absorbed in his work. Finally, when some remark of hers, repeated a second time, still remained unanswered, she realized that he had completely forgotten her existence. As far as he was concerned she was no longer Magda Wielitzska, posing for him, but Circe, the enchantress, whose amazing beauty he was transferring to his canvas in glowing brush strokes. As with all genius, the impulse of creative work had seized him suddenly and was driving him on regardless of everything exterior to his art.

Time had ceased to matter to him, and Magda, with little nervous pains shooting first through one limb, then another, was wondering how much longer she could maintain the pose. She was determined not to give in, not to check him while that fervor of creation was upon him.

The pain was increasing. She felt as if she were being stabbed with red-hot knives. Tiny beads of sweat broke out

on her forehead and her breath came gaspingly between her lips.

All at once the big easel at which Michael was standing receded out of sight, and when it reappeared again it was quite close to her, swaying and nodding like a mandarin. Instinctively she put out her hand to steady it, but it leaned nearer and nearer, and finally gave a huge lurch and swooped down on top of her, and the studio and everything in it faded out of sight.

The metallic tinkle of the gold goblet as it fell from her hand and rolled along the floor startled Michael out of his absorption. With a sharp exclamation he flung down his brush and palette and strode hurriedly to the divan. Magda was lying half across it in a little crumpled heap, unconscious.

His first impulse to lift her up was arrested by something in her attitude, and he stood quite still looking down at her, his face suddenly drawn and very weary.

In the limp figure with its upturned face and the purple shadows which fatigue had painted below the closed eyelids there was an irresistible appeal. She looked so young, so helpless, and the knowledge that she had done this for him—forced her limbs into agonized subjection until at last conscious endurance had failed her—moved him indescribably.

Surely this was a new Magda! Or else he had never known her. Had he been too hard—hard to her and pitilessly hard to himself—when he had allowed the ugly facts of her flirtation with Kit Raynham to drive him from her?

Eighteen months ago! And in all those eighteen months no word of gossip, no lightest breath of scandal against her, had reached his ears. Had he been merely a self-righteous Pharisee, enforcing the penalty of old sins, bygone failings? A grim smile twisted his lips. If so, and he had made her suffer, he had at least suffered equally himself!

He stooped over the prone figure on the divan. Lower, lower still, till a tendril of dark hair that had strayed across her forehead quivered beneath his breath. Then suddenly he drew back, jerking himself upright. Striding across the room he rang the bell and, when a neat maid-servant appeared in response, ordered sharply:

"Bring some brandy—quick! And ask Mrs. Grey to come here. Mademoiselle Wielitzska has fainted."

CHAPTER XXIII.

"This is very nice—but it won't exactly contribute toward finishing the picture!"

As she spoke Magda leaned back luxuriously against her cushions and glanced smilingly across at Michael, where he sat with his hand on the tiller of the *Bella Donna*, the little sailing yacht which Lady Arabella kept for the amusement of her guests rather than for her own enjoyment, since she herself could rarely be induced to go on board.

It had been what Magda called a "blue day." The sky overhead was a deep, unbroken azure, the dimpling, dancing waters of the Solent flinging back a blue almost as vivid; and she and Quarrrington had put out from Netherway harbor in the morning and crossed to Cowes.

Here they had lunched and Magda had purchased one or two of the necessities of life—from a feminine point of view—not procurable in the village emporiums at Netherway. Afterward, as there was still ample time before they need think of returning home, Michael had suggested an hour's run down toward the Needles.

The *Bella Donna* sped gayly before the wind, and neither of its occupants, engrossed in conversation, noticed that away to windward a bank of sullen cloud was creeping forward, slowly, but surely eating up the blue of the sky.

"Of course it will contribute toward

finishing the picture." Quarrrington answered Magda's laughing comment composedly. "A blow like this will have done you all the good in the world, and I shan't have you collapsing on my hands again as you did a week ago."

"Oh, then you brought me out on hygienic grounds alone?" derided Magda.

She was feeling unaccountably happy and light-hearted. Since the day when she had fainted during the sitting Michael seemed to have changed. He no longer gave utterance to those sudden, gibing speeches which had so often hurt her intolerably. That sense of his aloofness, as if a great wall rose between them, was gone. Somehow she felt that he had drawn nearer to her, and once or twice those gray, compelling eyes had glowed with a smothered fire which had set her heart racing unsteadily within her.

"Haven't you enjoyed to-day, then?" he inquired, responding to her question with another.

"I've loved it," she answered simply. "I think if I'd been a man I should have chosen to be a sailor."

"Then it's a good thing Heaven saw to it that you were a woman. The world couldn't have done without its Wielitzska."

"Oh, I don't know," Magda answered half indifferently, half wistfully. "It's astonishing how little necessary any one really is in this world. There's always some one ready to step into your shoes. If I were drowned this afternoon the Imperial management would soon find some one to take my place."

"But your friends wouldn't," he said quietly.

Magda laughed a little uncertainly.

"Well, I won't suggest we put them to the test, so please take me home safely."

As she spoke a big drop of rain splashed down on to her hand. Then another and another. Simultaneously she and Michael glanced upward to the

sky overhead, startlingly transformed from an arch of quivering blue into a monotonous expanse of gray across which came sweeping drifts of black cloud, heavy with storm.

"By Jove! We're in for it!" muttered Quarrington.

His voice held a sudden gravity. He knew the danger of those unexpected squalls which trap the unwary in the Solent, and inwardly he cursed himself for not having observed the swift alteration in the weather.

The *Bella Donna*, too, was by no means the safest of craft in which to meet rough weather. She was slipping along very fast now and Michael's keen glance swept the gray landscape to where, at the mouth of the channel, the treacherous Needles sentinelled the open seas.

"We must bring her round quick!" he said sharply, springing up. "Can you take the tiller? Do you know how to steer?"

Magda caught the note of urgency in his voice.

"I can do what you tell me," she said quietly.

"Do you know port from starboard?" he asked grimly.

"Yes. I know that."

Even while they had been speaking the wind had increased, churning the sea into foam-flecked billows which swirled and broke only to gather anew.

It was ticklish work bringing the *Bella Donna* to the wind. Twice she refused to come, lurching sickeningly as she rolled broadside on to the race of the wind-driven waves. The third time she heeled over till her canvas almost brushed the surface of the water and it seemed as if she must inevitably capsize. There was an instant's agonized suspense. Then she righted herself, the mainsail bellied out as the boom swung over, and the tense moment passed.

"Frightened?" queried Quarrington

when he had made fast the mainsheet. Magda smiled straight into his eyes.

"No. We almost capsized then, didn't we?"

"It was a near shave," he answered bluntly.

They did not speak much after that. They had enough to do to catch the wind which seemed to bluster from all quarters at once, coming in violent, gusty spurts which shook the frail little vessel from stem to stern. Time after time the waves broke over her bows, flooding the deck and drenching them both with stinging spray.

Magda sat very still, maintaining her grip of the wet and slippery tiller with all the strength of her small, determined hands. Her limbs ached with cold. The piercing wind and rain seemed to penetrate through her thin summer clothing to her very skin. But unwaveringly she responded to Michael's orders as they reached her through the bellowing of the gale. Her eyes were like stars and her lips closed in a scarlet line of courage.

"Port your helm! Hard! Hold on!"

Then the thudding swing of the boom as the *Bella Donna* slewed round on a fresh tack.

The hurly-burly of the storm was bewildering. In the last hour or so the entire aspect of things had altered, and Magda was conscious of a freakish sense of the unreality of it all. With the ridiculous inconsequence of thought which so often accompanies moments of acute anxiety she reflected that Noah probably experienced a somewhat similar astonishment when he woke up one morning to find that the flood had actually begun.

It seemed as if the storm had reached out long arms and drawn the whole world of land and sea and sky into its turbulent embrace. Driving sheets of rain blurred the coast line on either hand, while the wind caught up the gray waters into tossing, crested billows and



The storm of his passion had swept through her as the wind sweeps through a tree, leaving her spent and trembling.

flung them down again in a smother of angry spume.

Overhead, it screamed through the rigging of the little craft like a tormented devil, tearing at the straining canvas with devouring fingers while the slender mast groaned beneath its force.

Suddenly a terrific gust of wind seemed to strike the boat like an actual blow. Magda saw Michael leap aside, and in the same instant came a splitting, shattering report as the mast

snapped in half and a tangled mass of wood and cordage and canvas fell crash on to the deck where he had been standing.

Magda uttered a cry and sprang to her feet. For an instant her heart seemed to stop beating as she visioned him beneath the mass of tackle. Or had he been swept off his feet overboard into the welter of gray, surging waters which clamored round the boat?

The moment of uncertainty seemed

endless, immeasurable. Then Michael appeared, stepping across the wreckage, and came toward her. The relief was almost unendurable. She stretched out shaking hands.

"Oh, Michael! Michael!" she cried sobbingly.

And all at once she was in his arms. She felt them close about her, strong as steel and tender as love itself. In the rocking, helpless boat, with the storm beating up around them and death a sudden, imminent hazard, she had come at last into haven.

An hour later the storm had completely died away. It had begun to abate in violence almost immediately after the breaking of the *Bella Donna's* mast. It was as if, having wreaked its fury and executed all the damage possible, short of absolute destruction, its lust were satisfied. With the same suddenness with which it had arisen it sank away, leaving a sulky, sunless sky brooding above a sullen sea still heaving restlessly with the aftermath of tempest.

The yacht had drifted gradually out of midchannel shoreward, and after one or two unsuccessful efforts Quarrington at last succeeded in casting anchor. Then he turned to Magda, who had been assisting in the operation, with a smile.

"That's about all we can do," he said. "We're perfectly helpless till some tug or steamer comes along."

"Probably they'll run us down," she suggested. "We're in the fairway, aren't we?"

"Yes—which is about our best hope of getting picked up before night." Then, laying his hand on her arm: "Are you very cold and wet?"

Magda laughed—laughed out of sheer happiness. What did being cold matter, or wet either, if Michael loved her? And she was sure now that he did, though there had been but the one moment's brief embrace. Afterward he

had had his hands full endeavoring to keep the *Bella Donna* afloat.

"I think the wind has blown my things dry," she said. "How about you?"

"Oh, I'm all right—men's clothing being adapted for use, not ornament! But I must find something to wrap you up in. We may be here for hours and the frock you're wearing has about as much warming capacity as a spider's web."

He disappeared below into the tiny, single-berthed cabin and presently returned armed with a couple of blankets, one of which he proceeded to wrap round Magda's shoulders, tucking the other over her knees where she sat in the stern of the boat.

"I don't want them both," she protested, resisting. "You take one."

There was something rather delightful in this unconventional comradeship of discomfort.

"You'll obey orders," replied Michael firmly. "Especially as you're going to be my wife so soon."

A warm flush dyed her face from brow to throat. He regarded her with quizzical eyes. Behind their tender mockery lurked something else—something strong and passionate and imperious, momentarily held in leash. But she knew it was there, could feel the essential, imperative demand of it.

"Well? Does the prospect alarm you?"

Magda forced herself to meet his glance.

"So soon?" she repeated hesitantly.

"Yes. As soon as it can be accomplished," he said triumphantly.

He seated himself beside her and took her in his arms, blankets and all.

"Did you think I'd be willing to wait?" he said.

"I didn't think you wanted to marry me at all!" returned Magda, the words coming out with a little rush. "I thought you—you disapproved of me too much!"

His mouth twisted queerly.

"So I did. I'm scrapping the beliefs of half a lifetime because I love you. I've fought against it—tried not to love you—kept away from you! But it was stronger than I."

"Saint Michael, I'm glad—glad it was stronger I!" she said tremulously, a little break in her voice.

He bent his head and kissed her lips, and with the kiss she gave him back she surrendered her very self into his keeping. She felt his arms strained about her and the fierce pressure of their clasp taught her the exquisite joy of pain which is born of love.

She yielded resistlessly, every fiber of her being quiveringly responsive to the overwhelming passion of love which had at last stormed and broken down all barriers—both the man's will to resist and her own defenses.

Somewhere at the back of her consciousness Diane's urgent warning: "*Never give your heart to any man. Take everything, but do not give!*" tinkled feebly like the notes of a worn-out instrument. But even had she paused to listen to it she would only have laughed at it. She knew better.

Love was the most wonderful thing in the world. If it meant anything at all, it meant giving. And she was ready to give Michael everything she had—to surrender body, soul, and spirit, the threefold gift which a man demands of his mate.

She drew herself out of his arms and slipped to her knees beside him.

"Saint Michael," she said, her eyes searching his face as she spoke, "do you believe in me now?"

"Believe in you? I don't know whether I believe in you or not. But I know I love you! That's all that matters. I love you!"

"No, no!" She resisted his arms which sought to draw her back into embrace. "I want more than that. I'm beginning to realize things. There must

be trust with love. Michael, I'm not really hard—and selfish, as they say. I've been foolish and thoughtless, perhaps. But I've never done any harm. Not real harm. I've never"—she laughed a little brokenly—"I've never turned men into swine, Michael. I've hurt people, sometimes, by letting them love me. But," she went on wistfully, "I didn't know, then! Now—now I know what love is, I shall be different. Quite different. Saint Michael"—she leaned nearer to him, her upturned face transfigured by a tender, mystic little smile—"Saint Michael, I know now that love is self-surrender."

The tremulous sweetness of her, the humble submissiveness of her appeal, could not but win their way. Michael's lingering disbelief wavered and broke. She had been foolish—spoiled and thoughtless—but she had never done any real harm. Men had loved her, but how could it be otherwise? And perhaps, after all, they were none the worse for having loved her.

Deliberately Michael flung the past behind him and with it his last doubt of her. He drew her back into his arms, against his heart, and their lips met in a kiss which held not only love, but utter faith and confidence—a pledge for all time.

"Beloved!" he whispered. "My beloved!"

CHAPTER XXIV

Michael and Magda stood together on the deck of the crippled yacht which now rocked idly on a quite placid sea. Dusk was falling. That first glorious, irrecoverable hour when love had come into its own was past, and the consideration of things mundane was forcing itself on their notice—more especially consideration of their own particular plight.

"It looks rather as if we may have to spend the night here," observed Quarington, his eyes scanning the channel,

void of the welcome sight of sail or funnel.

Magda's brows drew together in a little troubled frown.

"Marraine and Gillian will be frightfully worried and anxious," she said uneasily. It was significant of the gradual alteration in her outlook that this solicitude for others should have rushed first of anything to her lips.

"Yes." He spoke with a curious abruptness. "Besides, that's not the only point. There's—Mrs. Grundy."

Magda shrugged her shoulders and laughed.

"Well, if it's to come to a choice between Mrs. Grundy and Davy Jones, I think I should decide to face Mrs. Grundy! Besides, people can't say much more—or much worse—things about me than they've said already."

Quarrington frowned moodily.

"I'd like to kick myself for bringing you out to-day and landing you into this mess. I can't stand the idea of people gossiping about you."

"They've left me very little reputation at any time. A little less can't hurt me."

His eyes grew stormy.

"Don't!" he said sharply. "I hate to hear you talk like that."

"But it's true! No public woman gets a fair chance."

"*You* will—when you're my wife," he said between his teeth. "I'll see to that!"

Magda glanced up at him swiftly.

"Then you don't want me to—to give up dancing after we're married?"

"Certainly I don't. I shall want you to do just as you like. I've no place for the man who asks his wife to 'give up' things in order to marry him. I've no more right ask you to give up dancing than you have to ask me to stop painting."

Magda smiled at him radiantly.

"Saint Michael, you're really rather nice," she observed impertinently. "So

few men are as sensible as that. I shall call you the 'Wise Man,' I think."

"In spite of to-day?" he queried whimsically, with a rueful glance at the débris of mast and canvas huddled on the deck.

"Because of to-day," she amended softly. "It's—it's very wise to be in love, Michael."

He drew her into his arms and his lips found hers.

"I think it is," he agreed.

Another hour went by and still there came no sign of any passing vessel.

"Why the devil isn't there a single tug passing up or down just when we happen to want one?" demanded Quarrington irately of the unresponsive universe. He swung round on Magda. "I suppose you're starving?" he went on, in his voice a species of savage discontent—that unreasonable fury to which the masculine temperament is prone when confronted with an obstacle which declines to yield either to force or persuasion.

Magda laughed outright.

"I'll admit to being hungry. Aren't you? It's horribly unromantic of us, Michael," she added regretfully.

Quarrington grinned.

"It is," he assented. "All the same, I believe I could consume a tin of bully beef and feel humbly grateful for it at the present moment!"

Magda had a sudden inspiration.

"Michael! Let's forage in the hold! There's almost sure to be some biscuits or chocolate there. Marraine nearly always has things like that put on board. And there may be something left from the last supply."

A brief search brought to light a half tin of biscuits and some plain chocolate, and off these, with the addition of a bottle of soda water also discovered in the hold, they proceeded to make an impromptu meal. It was a somewhat thin substitute for the perfectly appointed little dinner of which they would have partaken in the ordinary course of events

at "The Hermitage," but when you have been a good many hours without food of any description, and spent the greater part of the time in "saving your own life at sea," as Michael put it, even biscuits and chocolate have their uses.

When the improvised feast was over Quarlington explored the recesses of the tiny hold once more and unearthed a lantern, which he proceeded to light and attach to the broken mast. It burned with an uncertain light, momentarily threatening to go out altogether.

"We're not precisely well equipped with lights," he remarked grimly. "But at least that's a precaution—as long as it lasts! It may or may not save us from being run down."

Twilight deepened slowly into dark. The lights of Yarmouth sprang into being, a cluster of lambent orange points studding the dim coast of the island. One by one the stars twinkled out in the dusky sky, and a wanling moon, thin and frail like a worn sickle, flung a quivering ribbon of silver across the sea.

It was strangely still and quiet. Now and again the idle rudder creaked as the boat swung to the current. Once there came the long-drawn hoot of a distant siren. Beyond these fitful sounds only the gurgle of water lapping the sides of the boat broke the silence.

"We're here till morning," said Quarlington at last. "You may as well go to bed."

"To bed?"

"Well, there's a cabin, isn't there?" he asked, smiling. "And a more or less uncomfortable bunk. Come down and see what you can make of it as an abiding place for the night."

"And—and you? Can't we rig up anything for you?" Magda looked round her vaguely.

"I shan't sleep. I'll do sentry go on deck," he said, laughing. "It wouldn't do for us both to go comfortably asleep and get run down without even having a shot at making our presence known!"

"Then I'll keep watch with you," said Magda.

"You'll do nothing of the sort. You'll go down to the cabin and sleep."

"Let me stay, Michael. I couldn't bear to think of your watching all through the night while I slept comfortably below."

"You won't sleep *comfortably* if my estimate of the look of the bunk is correct," he answered grimly. "But you'll be out of the cold. Come, be sensible, Magda," he pleaded, as she shook her head mutinously. "You're not suitably attired for a night watch. You'd be perished with cold before morning."

"Well, let us take it in turns, then," she suggested. "I'll sleep four hours and then I'll keep a lookout while you have a rest."

"No," he said quietly.

"Then we'll *both* watch," she asserted. Through the starlit dark he could just discern her small head turned defiantly away from him.

"Has it occurred to you," he asked incisively, "what a night spent in the open might mean to you? Rheumatism is not precisely the kind of thing a dancer wants to cultivate."

"Well, I'm not going below, anyway."

She sat down firmly and Quarlington regarded her a moment in silence.

"You baby!" he said at last in an amused voice.

And the next moment she felt herself picked up as easily as if she were in very truth the baby he had called her, and carried swiftly down the few steps into the cabin. The recollection of that day of her accident in the fog, when he had carried her from the wrenched and twisted car into his own house, rushed over her. Now, as then, she could feel the strength of his arms clasped about her, the masterful purpose of the man which bore her whither he wished regardless of whether she wanted to go or not.

He laid her down on the bunk and, bending over her, kept his hands on her shoulders.

"Now," he demanded, "are you going to stay there?"

A faint rebellion still stirred within her.

"Supposing I say no?" she asked irresolutely.

"I'm not supposing anything so unlikely," he assured her. "I'm merely waiting to hear you say 'yes.'"

She recognized the utter futility of trying to pit her will against the indomitable will of the man beside her.

"Michael, you are a bully!" she protested indignantly, half angry with him.

"Then you'll stay there?" he persisted.

"You don't give me much choice." She twisted her shoulders restlessly beneath his hands.

He laughed a little.

"You haven't answered me."

"Well, then—yes!"

She almost flung the word at him and instantly she felt him lift his hands from her shoulders and heard his footsteps as he tramped out of the cabin and up on the deck. Presently he returned, armed with the blankets which he had wrapped round her earlier in the course of their vigil. Magda accepted them with becoming docility.

"Thank you, Wise Man," she said meekly.

He stood looking down at her in the faint moonlight which slanted in through the open door of the cabin, and all at once something in the intentness of his gaze awakened her to a sudden vivid consciousness of the situation—of the hour and of her absolute aloneness with him. Their solitude was as complete as if they had been cast away on a desert island.

Magda felt her pulses throb unevenly. The whole atmosphere seemed sentient and a thrill with the surge of some deep-lying emotion. She could feel it beat-

ing up against her, the clamorous demand of something hardly curbed and straining for release.

"Michael!" The word stammered past her lips.

The sound of her voice snapped the iron control he had been forcing on himself. With a hoarse, half-strangled exclamation he caught her up from where she lay, crushing her slim, soft body in a grip which almost stifled her, kissing her fiercely on eyes and lips and throat. Then abruptly he released her and without a word, without a backward look, strode out of the cabin and up on to the deck.

Magda sank down weakly on the edge of the narrow bunk. The storm of his passion had swept through her as the wind sweeps through a tree, leaving her spent and trembling. Sleep was an impossibility. Ten minutes, twenty passed—she could not have told how long it was. Then she heard him coming back, and as he gained the threshold she sprang to her feet and faced him, nervously on the defensive. In the pale, elusive moonlight, and with that startled poise of figure, she might well have been the hamsydad at bay of one of her most famous dances.

Michael looked rather white and there was a grim repression about the set of his lips. As he caught sight of her face with its mute apprehension and dilated eyes, he spoke quickly.

"You should be resting," he said. "Let me tuck you up and then try to go to sleep."

There was something infinitely reassuring in the steady tones of his voice. It held nothing but kindness, just comradeship and kindness. He was master of himself once more. For her sake he had fought back the rising tide of passion. It had no place while they two were here alone on the wide waters.

He stooped and picked up the blankets, laying them over her with a tenderness which seemed in some subtle

way to be a part of his very strength. Her taut nerves relaxed. She smiled up at him.

"Good night, Saint Michael," she said simply. "Take care of me."

He stooped and kissed the slim hand lying outside the blanket.

"Now—and always," he answered gravely.

When Magda awoke seven hours later the sunlight was streaming into the cabin. She could hear Michael moving about on deck and she sprang up and proceeded to make such toilette as was possible in the circumstances, taking down her hair and dressing it afresh at the tiny looking-glass hung on the wall. She had barely completed the operation when she heard Michael give a shout.

"Ahoy! Ahoy there!"

She ran up on deck. Approaching them was a small steam tug, and once again Quarrington sent his voice ringing lustily across the water while he flourished a large white handkerchief in the endeavor to attract the attention of those on board.

Suddenly the tug saw them and, altering her course, came fussing up alongside. Quarrington briefly explained their predicament—in the face of the *Bella Donna*'s battered appearance a lengthy explanation was hardly necessary!—and a few minutes later the tug was steaming for Netherway harbor, towing the crippled yacht behind her.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Please, Marraine, will you give us your blessing?"

The joyous excitement and relief incidental to the safe return of the voyagers had spent itself at last, and now, refreshed and invigorated by a hot bath and by a meal of more varied constituents than biscuit and plain chocolate, Magda propounded her question, a gleam of mirth dancing in her eyes.

Lady Arabella glanced doubtfully from one to the other. Then a look of undisguised satisfaction dawned in her face.

"Do you mean—" she began eagerly.

"We've been and gone and got engaged," explained Quarrington.

"My dears!" Lady Arabella jumped up with the agility of twenty rather than seventy and proceeded to pour out her felicitations. Incidentally, she kissed everybody all round, including Quarrington, and her keen old hawk's eyes grew all soft and luminous like a girl's.

Coppertop was hugely excited.

"Will the weddin' be to-morrow?" he asked hopefully. "An' shall I be a page an' carry the Fairy Lady's train?"

Magda smiled at him.

"Of course you shall be a page, Topkins. But the wedding won't be quite so soon as to-morrow," she told him.

"Why not?" insinuated Quarrington calmly. "There are such things as special licenses, you know."

"Don't be silly," replied Magda scathingly. "I've only just been saved from drowning, and I don't propose to take on such a risk as matrimony till I've had time to recover my nerve."

Lady Arabella surveyed them both with a species of irritated approval.

"And to think," she burst out at last indignantly, "of all the hours I've spent having my silly portrait painted and getting cramp in my stiff old joints, and that even then it needed Providence to threaten you both with a watery grave to bring you up to the scratch!"

"Well, we're engaged now," submitted Magda meekly.

Lady Arabella chuckled sardonically.

"If you weren't, you'd have to be—after last night!" she commented dryly.

"No one need know about last night," retorted Magda.

"Huh!" Lady Arabella snorted. "Half Netherway will know the tale by midday. And you may be sure your



A little low moan broke from her lips.
"Is—is that what you think of me?" she
almost whispered.

best enemy will hear of it. They always do."

"Never mind. It will make an excellent advertisement," observed Magda philosophically. "Can't you see it in all the papers—NARROW ESCAPE OF THE WIELITZSKA. In big capitals!"

8

They all laughed, realizing the great amount of probability contained in her forecast. And, thanks to an enterprising young journalist who chanced to be prowling about Netherway on that particular day, the London newspapers flared out into large headlines, accom-

panied by vivid and picturesque details of the narrow escape while yachting of the famous dancer and of the well-known artist, Michael Quarrington, who, in some of the cheaper papers, was credited with having saved the Wielitzska's life by swimming ashore with her.

The immediate result was an augmented post bag for "The Hermitage," and Gillian had to waste the better part of a couple of sunshiny days in writing round to Magda's friends assuring them of her continued existence and well-being and thanking them for their kind inquiries.

It was decided to keep the engagement private for the present, and life at "The Hermitage" resumed the even tenor of its way, Magda continuing to sit daily for the picture of Circe which Michael was anxious to complete before she returned to London for the autumn season.

"It's *our* picture, now, Saint Michael," she told him, with a happy, possessive pride in his work.

In this new atmosphere of tranquil happiness Magda bloomed like a flower in the sun. To the nameless natural charm which was always hers were added a fresh sweetness and appeal, and the full revelation of her love for him startled even Michael. He had not realized the deep capacity for love which had lain hidden beneath her nonchalance.

It seemed as if her whole nature had undergone a change. Alone with him she was no longer the assured woman of the world, the spoiled and feted dancer, but just a simple, unaffected girl, sometimes a little shy, almost diffident, at others frank and spontaneous with the splendid candor and simplicity of a woman who knows no fear of love, but goes courageously to meet it and all that it demands of her.

She was fugitively sweet and tender with Coppertop, and now and then her eyes would shine with a quiet, dreaming

light as if she visioned a future wherein some one like Coppertop, only littler, might lie in the crook of her arm.

Often during these tranquil summer days the two were to be found together, Magda recounting the most gorgeous stories of knights and dragons such as Coppertop's small soul delighted in. On one such occasion, at the end of a particularly thrilling narrative, he sat back on his heels and regarded her with a certain wistful anxiety.

"I suppose," he asked rather forlornly, "when you're maled they'll give you a little boy like me, Fairy Lady, won't they?"

The clear, warm color ran up swiftly beneath her skin.

"Perhaps so, Topkins," she answered very low.

He heaved a big sigh.

"He'll be a very *lucky* little boy," he said plaintively. "If mummie could 'en' have been my mummie, I'd have choosed you."

And so, in this tender atmosphere of peace and contentment, the summer slipped by until it was time for Magda to think of going back to London. The utter content and happiness of these weeks almost frightened her sometimes.

"It can't last, Gilly," she confided to Gillian one day, caught by an access of superstitious fear. "It simply *can't* last! No one was meant to be as happy as I am."

"I think we were all meant to be happy," replied Gillian simply. "Happy and good!" she added, laughing.

"Yes. But," she said rather drearily, "I haven't been particularly good. I've just done whatever it occurred to me to do, without considering the consequences. I expect," she went on slowly, "I shall be made to take my consequences all in a heap together one day."

Gillian smiled.

"Then I suppose we shall all of us have to rally round and get you out of them," she said cheerfully.

"Perhaps—perhaps you wouldn't be able to."

There was a strange note of foreboding in Magda's voice—an accent of fatality, and despite herself Gillian experienced a reflex sense of uneasiness.

"Nonsense!" she said brusquely. "What on earth has put all these ridiculous notions into your head?"

Magda smiled at her.

"I think it was four lines I read in a book yesterday. They set me thinking."

"More's the pity, then!" grumbled Gillian. "What were they?"

Magda was silent a moment, looking out over the sea with abstracted eyes. It was so blue to-day, all blue and gold in the dancing sunlight. But she knew that selfsame sea could be gray—gray and chill as death.

Her glance came slowly back to Gillian's face as she quoted the fragment of verse which had persisted in her thoughts:

"To-day and all the still unborn to-morrows
Have sprung from yesterday. For woe or
weal
The soul is weighted by the burden of dead
days—
Bound to the unremitting past with ropes of
steel."

After a moment she added:

"Even you couldn't cut through
'ropes of steel,' my Gillyflower."

Gillian tried to shrug away this fanciful depression of the moment.

"Well, by way of a counterblast to your dejection of spirit, I propose to send an announcement of your engagement to the *Morning Post*. You're not meaning to keep it private after we get back to town, are you?"

"Oh, no! It was only that I didn't want to be pestered with congratulations while we were down here. I suppose they'll have to come some day," she finished, with a small grimace of disgust.

"You'll be snowed under with them," Gillian assured her encouragingly.

The public announcement of the engagement preceded Magda's departure from Netherway by a few days, so that by the time "The Hermitage" house party actually broke up, its various members returning to town, all London was fairly humming with the news. The papers were full of it. Portraits of the fiancés appeared side by side, together with brief histories of their respective careers up to date and accompanied by refreshing details concerning their personal tastes.

"Dear me, I never knew Michael had a passion for raw meat before," remarked Magda, after reading various extracts from the different accounts aloud for Gillian's edification.

"Has he?" Gillian was arranging flowers and spoke somewhat indistinctly owing to the fact that she had the stem of a chrysanthemum between her lips.

"Yes, he must have. Listen to this: 'Mr. Quarrington's wonderful creations are evidently not entirely the fruit of the spirit, since we understand that his staple breakfast dish consists of a couple of underdone cutlets, so lightly cooked, in fact, as to be almost raw.' I'm glad I've learned that," pursued Magda earnestly. "It seems to me an important thing for a wife to know. Don't you think so, Gillian?"

Gillian shouted with delight.

"Of course I do! Do let's ask Michael to lunch and offer him a couple of raw cutlets on a charger."

"No," insisted Magda firmly. "I shall keep a splendid treat like that for him till after we're married. Even at a strictly conservative estimate it should be worth a new hat to me."

"Or a dose of arsenic in your next cup of tea," suggested Gillian, giggling.

The following evening was the occasion of Magda's first appearance at the Imperial after the publication of her engagement, and the theater was packed from floor to ceiling. "Houseful"

boards were exhibited outside at quite an early hour, and when Magda appeared on the stage she was received with such enthusiasm that for a time it was impossible to proceed with the ballet.

When finally the curtain fell on what the critics characterized next day as "the most appealing performance of 'The Swan Maiden' which Mademoiselle Wielitzska has yet given us," she received an absolute ovation. The audience went half crazy with excitement, applauding deliriously, while the front of the stage speedily became converted into a veritable bank of flowers from amid which Magda bowed and smiled her thanks.

She enjoyed every moment of it, every handclap. She was radiantly happy, and this spontaneous sharing in her happiness by the big public which idolized her served but to intensify it. She was almost crying as she returned to her dressing room after taking a dozen or more calls, and when, as usual, Virginie met her on the threshold, she dropped the great sheaf of lilies she was carrying and flung her arms round the old woman's neck.

"Oh, the dears!" she exclaimed. "The blessed *dears*! Virginie, I believe I'm the happiest woman alive!"

"And who should be, *mon petit chou*, if not thou?" returned the old woman with conviction. "Of course they love thee! *Mais bien sûr!* Dost thou not dance for them as none else can dance and give them angel visions which they could not imagine for themselves?" She paused. Then, thrusting her hand suddenly into the pocket of her apron: "Tiens! I forgot! Monsieur Davilof waits. Will mademoiselle receive him?"

Magda nodded. She had not seen Antoine since her return from Netherway. He had been away in Poland, visiting his mother whom, by the way, he adored. But, as her engagement to Michael was now public, she was anxious to get her first meeting with the

musician over. He would probably rave a little, despairing in the picturesque and dramatic fashion characteristic of him, and the sooner he "got it out of his system," as Gillian had observed on one occasion, the better for every one concerned. So Magda braced herself for the interview, and prepared to receive a tragical and despondent Davilof.

But she was not in the least prepared for the man as he appeared when Virginie ushered him into the dressing room and retired, discreetly closing the door behind her. Magda, her hand outstretched to greet him, paused in sheer dismay, her arm falling slowly to her side.

She had never seen so great a change in any man. His face was gray—gray and lined like the face of a man who has had no sleep for days. His shoulders stooped a little as if he were too weary to hold himself upright, and there was a curiously rigid look about his features, particularly the usually mobile mouth. The only live thing about him seemed to be his eyes. They blazed with a burning brightness which made her think of flame. With it all, he was as immaculately groomed, his small golden beard as perfectly trimmed, as ever.

"Antoine!" His name faltered from Magda's lips. The man's face, its beauty all marred by some terrible turmoil of the soul, shocked her.

He vouchsafed no greeting, but came swiftly to her side.

"Is it true?" he demanded imperiously.

She shrank back from him. There was a dynamic force about him which startled her.

"Is what true?"

"Is it true that you're engaged to Quarrington?"

"Of course it is. It was in all the papers. Didn't you see it?"

"Yes, I saw it. I didn't believe it. I was in Poland when I heard and I

started for England at once. But I was taken ill on the journey. Since then I've been traveling night and day." He paused, adding in a tone of finality: "You must break it off."

"Break it off? Are you crazy, Antoine?"

"No, I'm not crazy. But you're mine. You're meant for me. And no other man shall have you!"

Magda's first impulse was to order him out of the room. But the man's haggard face was so pitifully eloquent of the agony he had been enduring that she had not the heart. Instead, she temporized persuasively.

"Don't talk like that, Antoine." She spoke very gently. "You don't mean it, you know. If—if you do care for me as you say, you'd like me to be happy, wouldn't you?"

"I'd make you happy," he said hoarsely.

She shook her head.

"No," she answered. "You couldn't make me happy. Only Michael can do that. So you must let me go to him. Antoine, I'd rather go with your good wishes. Won't you give them to me?" she asked appealingly. "We've been friends so long!"

"Friends?" he broke in fiercely. "No! We've never been 'friends.' I've been your lover from the first moment I saw you, and I shall be your lover till I die!"

Magda retreated before his vehemence. She was still wearing her costume of the *Swan Maiden* and there was something frailly virginal and elusive about her as she drew away from him which set the hot, foreign blood in him on fire. In two strides he was at her side, his hands gripping her bare arms with a savage clasp which hurt her.

"*Mon adorée!*"

His voice was harsh with the tensity of passion, and the cry which struggled from her throat for utterance was smooth-

ered by his lips on hers. The burning kisses seemed to scorch her, consuming, overwhelming her. When at last he took his mouth from hers she tried unavailingly to free herself. But his clasp of her only tightened.

"Now you know how I love you!" he said grimly. He was breathing rather fast, but in some curious way he seemed to have regained his self-control. It was as if he had only slipped the leash of passion so that she might, as he said, comprehend his love for her. "Do you think I'll give you up? I tell you I'd rather kill you than see you Quarrington's wife."

Once more she made an effort to release herself.

"Oh, you're mad, you're mad!" she cried. "Let me go, Davilof! At once!"

"No," he said in a measured voice. "Don't struggle. I'm not going to let you go. Not yet. I've reached my limit. You shall go when you promise to marry me. Me, not Quarrington!"

She had not been frightened by the storm of passion which had carried him headlong. That had merely roused her to impotent anger. But this quiet, purposeful composure which had succeeded in filling her with an odd kind of misgiving.

"It's absurd to talk like that," she said, holding on desperately to her self-possession. "It's silly—and melodramatic, and only makes me realize how glad I am I shall be Michael's wife and not yours."

"You will never be Quarrington's wife!"

He spoke with conviction. Magda called up all her courage to defy him.

"And do you propose to prevent it?" she asked contemptuously.

"Yes." Then, suddenly: "*Adorée*, don't force me to do it! I don't want to. Because it will hurt you horribly. And it will all be saved if you'll promise to marry me."

He spoke appealingly, with an ear-

nestness which was unmistakable. But Magda's nerve was gradually returning.

"You don't seem to understand that you can't prevent my marrying Michael—or any one else," she said coolly. "You haven't the power."

"I can prevent your marrying Michael." He spoke doggedly.

She was silent a moment.

"I suppose," she said at last, "you think that because he once thought badly of me you can make him think the same again. Well, you can't. Michael and I trust each other absolutely!"

Her face was transfigured. Michael trusted her now! Nothing could really hurt her while he believed in her. She could afford to laugh at Antoine's threat.

"And now," she said quietly, "will you please release me?"

Slowly, reluctantly Davilof's hands dropped from her arms, revealing red marks where the grip of the fingers had crushed the soft, white flesh. He uttered a stifled exclamation as his eyes fell on the angry-looking marks.

"*Mon Dieu!* I've hurt you!"

"No!" Magda faced him with a defiance which was rather splendid. "No! You can't hurt me, Davilof! Only the man I love can do that!"

He flinched at the proud significance of the words, denying him even the power to hurt her. It was almost as if she had struck him, contemptuously disdainful of his toy weapon, the weapons of the man who didn't count.

There was a long silence. At last he spoke.

"You'll be sorry for that," he said in a voice of concentrated anger. "Damned sorry! Because it isn't true. I *can* hurt you! And by God, if you won't marry me, I will! Magda!" With one of the swift changes so characteristic of the man he softened suddenly into passionate supplication. "Have a little mercy! God! If you knew how I love you, you

couldn't turn me away! Wait! Think again!"

"That will do." She checked him imperiously. "I don't want your love. And for the future please understand that you won't even be a friend. I don't wish to see or speak to you again!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

Magda sat gazing idly into the fire, watching with abstracted eyes the flames leap up and curl gleefully round the fresh logs with which she had just fed it. She was thinking about nothing in particular, merely reveling in the pleasant warmth and comfort of the room and in the prospect of a lazy evening spent at home, since to-night she was not due to appear in any of the ballets to be given at the Imperial Theater.

Outside, the snow was falling steadily in feathery flakes, hiding the grime of London beneath a garment of shimmering white and transforming the commonplace houses built of brick and mortar, each capped with its ugly chimney stack, into glittering fairy palaces, crowned with silver towers and minarets.

The bitter weather served to emphasize the cozy comfort of the room, and Magda curled up into her chair luxuriously. She was expecting Michael to dinner at Friars' Holm this evening. They had not seen each other for three whole days, so that there was an added edge to her enjoyment of the prospect. She would have so much to tell him! About the triumphant reception she had had the other night down at the theater—he had been prevented from being present—and about the unwarrantable attitude Davilof had adopted, which had been worrying her not a little. He would sympathize with her over that—the effortless sympathy of the man in possession!

Then the unwelcome thought obtruded

itself that if the snow continued falling Michael might be weather bound and unable to get out to Hampstead. She uncurled herself from her chair and ran to the window. The sky stretched somberly away in every direction. No sign of a break in the lowering, snow-filled clouds! She drummed on the window with impatient fingers. And then, drowning the little tapping noise they made, came the sound of an opening door and Melrose's placid voice announcing:

"Mr. Quarrington."

Magda whirled round from the window.

"Michael!" she exclaimed joyfully. "I was just wondering if you would be able to get over this evening. I suppose you came while you could!" she added, laughing. "I shouldn't be in the least surprised if you were snowed up here. Shall you mind—dreadfully—if you are?"

But Michael made no response to the tenderly mocking question, nor did her smile draw from him any answering smile. She looked at him waveringly. He had been in the room quite long enough to take her in his arms and kiss her. And he hadn't done it.

"Michael—" She faltered a little. "How queer you are! Have you—brought bad news?" A sudden dread rushed through her. "It's not—Marraine?"

"No, no." He spoke hastily, answering the startled apprehension in her eyes. "It's not that."

Her mind, alertly prescient, divined significance in the mere wording of the phrase.

"Then there is—something?"

"Yes, there is something."

His voice sounded forced, and Magda waited with a strange feeling of tension for him to continue.

"I want to ask you a question," he went on in the same carefully measured accents. "Did you ever stay at a place

called Stockleigh—Stockleigh Farm at Ashcombe?"

Stockleigh! At the sound of the word it seemed to Magda as if a hand closed suddenly round her heart, squeezing it so tightly that she could not breathe.

"I—yes, I stayed there," she managed to say at last.

"Ah-h!" It was no more than a suddenly checked breath. "When were you there?" The question came swiftly, like the thrust of a sword. With it, it seemed to Magda that she could feel the first almost imperceptible pull of the "ropes of steel."

"I was there—the summer before last," she said slowly.

Michael made no answer. Only in the silence which followed she saw his face change. Something that had been hope, a fighting hope, died out of his eyes and his jaw seemed to set itself with a curious inflexibility.

She waited for him to speak, waited with a keyed-up intensity of longing which was almost physically painful. At last, unable to bear the continued silence, she spoke again. Her voice cracked a little.

"Why—why do you ask, Michael?"

He looked at her and a sudden cynical amusement gleamed in his eyes, an amusement so bitterly unmirthful that there seemed something almost brutal about it. Her hand went up to her face as if to screen out the sight of it.

"You can't guess, I suppose?" he said with dry, harsh irony. Then, after a moment: "Why did you never tell me you were there? You never spoke of it. Wasn't it curious you should never speak of it?"

She made a step toward him. She could not endure this torturing suspense another instant. It was racking her. She must know what Stockleigh signified to him.

"What do you mean? Tell me what you mean?" she asked desperately.



"Of course, if you feel you have not the strength of will to keep your vow, you must not take it."

"Do you remember the story I told you down at Netherway—of a man and his wife and another woman?"

"Yes. I remember," she replied, almost whispering.

"That was the story of my sister, June, and her husband, Dan Storran. You—were the other woman."

She felt his eyes—those eyes out of which all hope had died—fixed on her.

"June—your sister! Your sister? Are you sure?" she stammered stupidly.

It couldn't be true! Not even God could have thought of a punishment so cruel, so awful as this. That June—the woman who had died just because she "had no heart to go on living"—should be Michael's sister! Oh, it was a crazy tangling of the threads—mad! Like some macabre invention sprung from a disordered brain. She wanted

to laugh, and she knew if she began to laugh she should never stop. She felt she was losing her hold over herself. With a violent effort she clutched at her self-control.

"Will you say it all over again, please?" she said in a flat voice. "I don't think I understand."

"Nor did I till to-day," he replied shortly. "Davilof made me understand—this morning."

"Davilof?" The word seemed to drag itself from her throat. Davilof—who had been at Stockleigh that summer! Then it was all going to be true, after all.

"Yes, Davilof. He had chanced on the fact that June was my sister. Very few people knew it, because, when she married, it was against our father's wishes, and she had cut herself adrift

from the family. I wanted to help her, but she would never let me."

He paused, then went on tonelessly:

"It's all quite clear, isn't it? You know everything that happened while you were at Stockleigh. I've told you what happened afterward. Storran cleared out of the country at once, and June had nothing left to live for. The only thing I didn't know was the name of the woman who had smashed up both their lives. I saw Dan in Paris. He came to me at my studio. But he was a white man. He never gave away the name of the woman who had ruined him. I only knew she had spent that particular summer at Stockleigh. It was Davilof who told me who the woman was."

"I can prevent your marrying Quarington." Magda could hear again the quiet conviction of Antoine's utterance. So he had known, then, when he threatened her, that June was Michael's sister! She wondered dully how long he had been aware of the fact; how he had first stumbled across it and realized its value as a hammer with which to crush her happiness. Not that it mattered. Nothing mattered any more. The main fact was that he *had* known.

June was dead! Amid the confused welter of emotions which seemed to have utterly submerged her during the last few minutes, Magda had almost lost sight of this as a fact by itself, as distinct from its identity with the fact that Michael's sister was dead. She felt vaguely sorry for June.

Since the day she and Gillian had left Ashencombe she had heard nothing of Storran or his wife. No least scrap of news relating to them had come her way. In the ordinary course of events it was hardly likely that it would. The circles of their respective lives did not overlap each other. And Magda had made no effort to discover what had happened at Stockleigh after she had left there. She had been glad to shut the

door on that episode in her life. She was not proud of it.

There were other incidents, too, which she could have wished were blotted out—the Raynham incident among them. With the new insight which love had brought her, she was beginning to rate these things at their true value, to realize how little she had understood of all love's exquisite significance when she played with it as lightly as a child might play with a trinket. She had learned better now, learned that love was of the spirit as well as of the body, and that in playing at love she had played with men's souls.

She believed she had put that part of her life behind her—all those unrecognizing days before love came to her. And now, without warning, suddenly as an Eastern night, the past had risen up and confronted her. The implacable ropes of steel held her in bondage.

"Michael—can't you—forgive me?"

Her voice wavered and broke as she realized the utter futility of her question. Between them, now and always, there must lie the young, dead body of June Storran.

"Forgive you?" Michael's voice was harsh with an immeasurable bitterness. "Good God! What are you made of that you can even ask me? It's women like you who turn this world into plain hell! Look back! Have you ever looked back, I wonder?" He paused and she knew his eyes were searching her—those keen, steady eyes, hard, now, like flint, searching the innermost recesses of her being. She felt as if he were dragging the soul out of her body, stripping it naked to the merciless lash of truth.

"June—my little sister, the happiest of mortals—dead, through you! And Storran—he was a big man, white all through!—down and out! And God knows who else has had his sun put out by you! You're like a blight—spreading

disease and corruption wherever you go."

A little moan broke from her lips. For a moment it was a physical impossibility for her to speak. She could only shrink, mute and quivering, beneath the flail of his scorn.

At last:

"Is—is that what you think of me?" she almost whispered.

"Yes."

She winced at the harsh monosyllable. There was a finality about it—definite, unalterable. She looked at him dry-eyed, her face tragically beautiful in its agony. But he seemed impervious to either its beauty or its suffering. There was no hint of softening in him. Without another word he swung round on his heel and turned to leave her.

"Michael! Don't go!" The lovely voice was a mere thread of sound, hoarse and strangulated. "Don't go! Oh, be a little merciful!"

She laid an imploring hand on his arm, and at the touch of her his iron composure shook a little. For a moment the hardness in his eyes was wiped out by a look of intolerable pain. Then, with a quiet, inexorable movement he released himself from her straining clasp.

"There's no question of mercy," he said inflexibly. "I'm not judging you or punishing you. It's simply that I can't marry you. You must see that June's death—my sister's death—lies at your door."

"No," she said. "No. I suppose you can't marry me—now."

Her breath came in short, painful gasps. Her face seemed to have grown smaller, to have shrunk. There was a pinched look about the nostrils and every drop of blood had drained away, leaving even her lips a curious grayish white. She leaned forward, swaying a little.

"I suppose," she said in a clear, dry

voice, "you don't even love me any more?"

His hands clenched and he took a sudden impetuous step toward her.

"Not love you?" he said. And at last the man's own agony broke through his enforced calm, shaking his voice so that it was hoarse and terrible. "Not love you? I love you now as I loved you the day I first saw you. God in heaven! Did you think love could be killed so easily? Does it die—just because it's forbidden by every decent instinct that a man possesses? If so," he said, with overwhelming bitterness, "nine-tenths of us would find the world an easier place to live in!"

"And there is—no forgiveness, Michael?" The lovely, grief-wrung face was uplifted to his beseeching.

"Don't ask me," he said hoarsely. "You know there can be none."

He turned and strode to the door. He did not look back even when his name tore itself like a cry between her lips. The next moment the sound of the door's closing came dully to her ears.

She looked vaguely round the room. The fire was dying, the charred logs sinking down on to a bed of smoldering cinders. A touch would scatter them from their semblance of logs into a heap of gray, formless ash. Outside the window the snow still fell monotonously, wrapping the world in a passionless, chill winding sheet.

With a little broken cry she stumbled forward on to her knees; her arms outflung across the table.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The long, interminable night was over at last. Never afterward, all the days of her life, could Magda look back on the black horror of those hours without a shudder. She felt as if she had been through hell and come out on the other side, to find stretching before her only the blank, gray desolation of chaos.

She was stripped of everything—of love, of happiness, even of hope. There was nothing in the whole world to look forward to. There never would be again. And when she looked back it was with eyes that had been vouchsafed a terrible enlightenment.

Phrases which had fallen from Michael's lips scoured her anew throughout the long hours of the night. "Women like you make this world into plain hell," he had said. "You're like a blight—spreading disease and corruption wherever you go." And the essential truth which each sentence held left her writhing.

It was all true—horribly, hideously true! The magical, mysterious power of beauty which had been given her, which might have helped to lighten the burden of the sad old world wherever she passed, she had used to destroy and deface and mutilate. The debt against her—the debt of all the pain and grief which she had brought to others—had been mounting up, higher and higher through the years. And now the time had come when payment was to be exacted.

Quite simply and directly, without seeking in any way to exculpate herself, she had told Gillian the bare facts of what had happened—that her engagement was broken off and the reason why. But she had checked all comment and the swift, understanding sympathy which Gillian would have given. Criticism or sympathy would equally have been more than she could bear.

"There is nothing to be said or done about it," she maintained. "I've sinned, and now I'm to be punished for my sin. That's all."

The child of Hugh Vallincourt spoke in that impassive summing up of the situation, and Lady Arabella, with her intimate knowledge of both Hugh and his sister Catherine, would have ascribed it instantly to the Vallincourt

strain in her goddaughter. To Gillian, however, to whom the Vallincourts were nothing more than a name, the strange submissiveness of it was incomprehensible. As the days passed, she tried to rouse Magda from the apathy into which she seemed to have fallen, but without success.

"It's no use, Gillyflower," she would reply, with a weary little smile. "There is no way out. Do you remember I once said I was too happy for it to last? It was quite true. Have you told Marraine?" she asked suddenly.

"Yes. And she wants to see you."

"I don't think I want to see her—or any one just at present. I've got to think," she said, a puzzled frown knitting her level brows, "to think things out."

"What do you mean? What are you going to do?"

"I—I don't know—yet," she answered slowly.

Gillian regarded her with some anxiety. That Magda, usually so unreserved and spontaneous, should shut her out of her confidence thoroughly disquieted her. She felt afraid. It seemed to her as if the girl were more or less stunned by the enormity of the blow which had befallen her. She went about with a curious absence of interest in anything—composed, quiet, absorbed in her own thoughts, only rousing herself to appear at the Imperial as usual. Probably her work at the theater was the one thing that saved her from utter collapse.

As far as Gillian knew she had not shed a single tear. Only her face seemed to grow daily more strained looking, and her eyes held a curious expression which was difficult to interpret.

There were days which she spent entirely in the seclusion of her own room, and then Virginie alone was allowed entrance. The old Frenchwoman would come in with some special little dish she had cooked with her own hands, hoping

to tempt her beloved mistress's appetite, which in these days had dwindled to such insignificant proportions that Virginie was in despair.

"*Mais voyons, mon petite chou,*" she would say. "Thou must eat."

"I don't want anything—really, Virginie," Magda would insist.

"And wherefore not?" demanded Virginie indignantly one day. "Thou art not one of the Sisters of Penitence that thou must needs deny thyself the good things of life."

Magda looked up with a sudden flash of interest.

"The Sisters of Penitence, Virginie? Who are they? Tell me about them."

Virginie set a plate containing an epicurean *omelette aux fines herbes* triumphantly in front of her.

"Eat that, then, *chérie*, while I tell thee of them," she replied, with masterly diplomacy. "It is good, the omelette. Virginie made it for thee with her own hands."

Magda laughed faintly in spite of herself and began upon the omelette obediently.

"Very well, then. Tell me about the Sisters of Penitence. Are they always being sorry for what they've done?" she asked curiously.

"It is a sisterhood, *mademoiselle chérie*, for those who would withdraw themselves from the world. They are very strict, I believe, the sisters, and mortify the flesh exceedingly. Me, I cannot see why we should leave the beautiful world *le bon Dieu* has put us into. For certain, He would not have put us in if He had not meant us to stay there!"

"Perhaps—they are happier—out of the world, Virginie," suggested Magda slowly.

"*Peut-être.* But my niece, who was in the sisterhood a year, was glad to come out again. *Je le crois bien!* Though, of course, she left her sins behind her, and that was good. It is al-

ways good to get rid of one's sins, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"Get rid of your sins? But how can you?"

"*Ma foi!* If one does penance day and night, day and night, for a whole long year, one surely expiates them! And then," with calm certainty, "of course one has got rid of them. They are wiped off the slate and one begins again. At least, it was so with my niece; for when she came out of the sisterhood, the man who had betrayed her married her, and they have three—no, four *gros bébés* now. So that it is evident *le bon Dieu* was pleased with her penance and rewarded her accordingly."

Magda repressed an inclination to smile at the naive simplicity of Virginie's creed. Life would indeed be an easy affair if one could "get rid of one's sins" on such an ingenuous principle of *quid pro quo!*

But Virginie came of French peasant stock, and to her untutored mind such a process of wiping the slate clean seemed extremely reasonable. She continued with enthusiasm.

"She but took the vow of penitence for a year. *C'est permis.* It is a rule of the sisterhood. If one has sinned greatly, one can take a vow of penitence for a year and expiate the sin. Some return afterward and take the final vows. But my niece—no! She came back into the world again. She is a good girl, my niece Suzette. *C'est une brave fille, celle-là.* Mademoiselle has enjoyed her omelette? Yes?" she finished anxiously.

Magda nodded.

"Yes, Virginie, I've enjoyed it. And I think your niece was certainly a *brave fille*. I'm glad she's happy now."

For long after Virginie had left her, Magda sat quietly thinking. The story of the old Frenchwoman's niece had caught hold of her imagination. Like herself she had sinned, though differ-

ently. Within her own mind Magda wondered whether she or Suzette were in reality the greater sinner of the two. Suzette had at least given all, without thought of self, whereas she herself had only taken—taken with both hands, giving nothing in return.

Probably Suzette had been an attractive little person, of the same type of brown-eyed, vivacious youth which must have been Virginie's five-and-thirty years ago, and her prettiness had caused her downfall. Magda glanced toward the mirror. It was through her beauty she herself had sinned. It had given her so much power, that exquisite, perfect body of hers, and she had pitifully misused the power it had bestowed. The real difference between herself and Suzette lay in the fact that the little French girl had paid the uttermost farthing of the price demanded, had submitted herself to discipline till she had surely expiated all the evil she had done. What if she, likewise, were to seek some such discipline?

The idea had presented itself to her at precisely the moment when she was in the grip of an agony of recoil from her former way of life. Like her father, she had been suddenly brought up short and forced to survey her actions through the eyes of some one else, to look at all that she had done from another's angle of vision. And coincidentally, just as in the case of her father, the abrupt downfall of her hopes, the sudden shattering of her happiness, seemed as if they were due to the intervention of an angry Heaven.

The fanatical Vallincourt blood which ran in Magda's veins caused her to respond instinctively to this aspect of the matter. But the strain of her passionate, joy-loving mother which crossed with it tempered the tendency toward quite such drastic self-immolation as had appealed to Hugh Vallincourt.

To Magda, Michael had come to mean the beginning and end of everything, the

pivot upon which her whole existence hung. So that if Michael shut her out of his life forever, that existence would no longer hold either value or significance. From her point of view, then, the primary object of any kind of self-discipline would be that it might make her more fit to be the wife of "Saint Michael."

He despised her now. The evil she had done stood between them like a high wall. But if she were to make atonement, as Suzette had atoned, surely when the wickedness had been purged out of her by pain and discipline, Michael would relent!

The idea lodged in her mind. It went with her by day and colored her thoughts by night, and it was still working within her when she at last nerv'd herself to go and see her godmother.

Lady Arabella, as might have been anticipated, concealed her own sore-heartedness under a manner which was rather more militant than usual, if that were possible.

"Why you hadn't more sense than to spend your time fooling with a sort of cave man from the backwoods, I can't conceive," she scolded. "You must have known how it would end."

"I didn't. I never thought about it. I was just sick with Michael because he had gone abroad, and then, when I heard that he was married, it was the last straw. I don't think—that night I should have much cared what happened."

Lady Arabella nodded.

"Women like you make it heaven or hell for the men who love you."

"And hell, without the choice of heaven, for ourselves," returned Magda.

The bitterness in her voice wrung the old woman's heart. She sighed, then straightened her back defiantly.

"We have to bear the burden of our blunders, my dear." There was a reminiscent look in the keen old eyes. Lady Arabella had had her own battles to

fight. "And, after all, who should pay the price if not we ourselves?"

"But if the price is outrageous, Mar-raine? What then?"

"Still you've got to pay."

Magda returned home with those words ringing in her ears. They fitted into the thoughts which had been obsessing her with a curious precision. It was true, then. You had to pay, one way or another. Lady Arabella knew it. Little Suzette had somehow found it out.

That night a note left Friars' Holm addressed to the mother superior of the Sisters of Penitence.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was a bald, austere-looking room. Magda glanced about her curiously at the plain, straight-backed chairs, at the meticulously tidy desk and bare, polished floor. Everything was scrupulously clean, but the total absence of anything remotely resembling luxury struck poignantly on eyes accustomed to all the ease and beauty of surroundings which unlimited money can procure.

By contrast with the severity of the room Magda felt uncomfortably conscious of her own attire. The exquisite gown she was wearing, the big velvet hat with its drooping plume, the French shoes with their buckles and curved Louis heels—all seemed acutely out of place in this austere, formal-looking chamber.

Her glance came back to the woman sitting opposite her, the mother superior of the Sisters of Penitence, tall, thin, undeniably impressive, with a stern, colorless face as clean-cut as a piece of ivory, out of which gleamed cold-blue eyes which seemed to regard the dancer with a strange mixture of fervor and hostility.

Magda could imagine no reason for the antagonism which she sensed in the steady scrutiny of those light-blue eyes.

As far as she was concerned, the mother superior was an entire stranger, without incentive either to like or dislike her.

But to the woman who, while she had been in the world, had been known as Catherine Vallincourt, the name of Magda Wielitzska was as familiar as her own. In the dark, slender girl before her, whose pale, beautiful face called to mind some rare and delicate flower, she recognized the living embodiment of her brother's transgression—that brother who had made Diane Wielitzska his wife and the mother of his child.

All she had anticipated of evil consequence at the time of the marriage had crystallized into hard fact. The child of the "foreign dancing woman"—the being for whose existence Hugh's mad passion for Diane had been responsible—had on her own confession worked precisely such harm in the world as she, Catherine, had foreseen. And now, the years which had raised Catherine to the position of mother superior of the community she had entered had brought that child to her doors as a penitent, waveringly willing to make expiation.

Catherine was conscious of a strange elevation of spirit. She felt ecstatically uplifted at the thought that it might be given to her to purge from Hugh's daughter, by severity of discipline and penance, the evil born within her. In some measure she would thus be instrumental in neutralizing her brother's sin.

She was supremely unconscious that to a certain extent, though by no means altogether, her zealous ardor had its origin in her rooted antipathy to Hugh's wife and hence to the child of the marriage. But, since beneath her sable habit there beat the heart of just an ordinary, natural woman, with many faults and failings still unconquered in spite of the austerities of her chosen life, a certain very human element of satisfaction

mingled itself with her fervor for Magda's regeneration.

With a curious impassivity which masked the intensity of her desire she had told Magda that, by the rules of the community, penitents who desired to make expiation were admitted there, but that if once the step were taken, and the year's vow of penitence voluntarily assumed, there could be no return to the world until the expiration of the time appointed.

Somehow the irrevocability of such a vow, undertaken voluntarily, had not struck her in its full significance until Catherine had quietly, almost tonelessly, in the flat, level voice not infrequently acquired by the *religieuse*, affirmed it.

"Supposing"—Magda looked round the rigidly bare room with a new sense of apprehension—"supposing I felt I simply couldn't stand it any longer? Do you mean to say, *then*, that I should not be allowed to leave here?"

"No, you would not be permitted to. Vows," said the mother superior, with a quiet, direct force, "are not toys to be broken at will."

"A year is a long time," murmured Magda.

The eyes beneath the coifed brow with its fine network of wrinkles were adamant.

"The body must be crucified that the soul may live," returned the cold voice unflinchingly.

Magda's thoughts drew her this way and that. A year! It was an eternity! And yet, if only she could emerge purified, a woman worthy to be Michael's wife, she felt she would be willing to go through with it.

It was as if the white-faced, passionless woman beside her read her thoughts.

"If you would be purified," said Catherine, "if you would cast out the devil that is within you, you will have to abide meekly by such penance as is ordained. You must submit yourself to pain."

At the words a memory of long ago



Behind the harshly uttered statement Gillian could sense the unspeakable bitterness of the man's soul.

stirred in Magda's mind. She remembered that when her father had beaten her as a child he had said: "If you hurt people enough, you can stop them from committing sin."

Groping dimly for some light that might elucidate the problems which bewildered her, Magda clutched at the words as if they were a revelation. They seemed to point to the only way by which she might repair the past.

Catherine, watching closely the changes on the pale, sensitive face, spoke again.

"Of course, if you feel you have not the strength of will to keep your vow, you must not take it."

The words acted like a spur. Instantly, Magda's decision was taken.

"If I take the vow, I shall have strength of mind to keep it," she said.

The following evening Magda composedly informed Gillian that she proposed to take a vow of expiation and retire into the community of the Sisters of Penitence for a year. Gillian was frankly aghast; she had never dreamed of any such upset to the whole miserable business of Magda's broken engagement.

"But it is madness!" she protested. "You would hate it!"

Magda nodded.

"That's just it. I've done what I liked all my life. And you know what the result has been! Now I propose to do what I *don't* like for a year."

Neither persuasion nor exhortation availed to shake her resolution and in despair Gillian referred the matter to Lady Arabella, hoping she might induce Magda to change her mind.

Lady Arabella accepted the news with unexpected composure.

"It is just what one might expect from the child of Hugh Vallincourt," she said thoughtfully. "It's the swing of the pendulum. There's always been that tendency in the Vallincourts—the tendency toward atonement by some sort of violent self-immolation. They are invariably excessive—either excessively bad like the present man, Rupert, or excessively devout like Hugh and Catherine! By the way, the Sisters of Penitence is the community Catherine first joined. I wonder if she is there still. Probably she's dead by now, though. I remember hearing some years ago that she was seriously ill, somewhere about the time of Hugh's death. That's the last I ever heard of her. I've been out of touch with the whole Vallincourt family for so many years now that I don't know what has become of them."

"You don't mean to say that you're going to let Magda do what she proposes?" exclaimed Gillian in dismayed astonishment.

"There's never much question of 'letting' Magda do things, is there?" re-

torted Lady Arabella. "If she's made up her mind to be penitential, penitential she'll be! I dare say it won't do her any harm."

"I don't see how it can do her any good," protested Gillian. "Magda isn't cut out for a sisterhood."

"That's just why it may be good for her," returned Lady Arabella grimly.

"I don't believe in mortification of the flesh and all that sort of thing, either," continued Gillian obstinately.

"My dear, we must all work out our own salvation, each in his own way. Prayer and fasting would never be my method. But for some people it's the only way. I believe it is for the Vallincourts. In any case, it's only for a year. And a year is a very little time out of life."

Nevertheless, at Gillian's urgent request, Lady Arabella made an effort to dissuade Magda from her intention.

"If you live long enough, my dear," she told her crisply, "Providence will see to it that you get your deserts. You needn't be so anxious to make sure of them. Retribution is a very sure-footed traveler."

"It isn't only retribution, punishment, I'm looking for," returned Magda. "It is—I can't quite explain it, Marraine, but even though Michael never sees me or speaks to me again, I'd like to feel I'd made myself into the sort of woman he *would* speak to."

From that standpoint she refused to move, declining even to discuss the matter further, but proceeded quietly and unswervingly with her arrangements. The failure to complete her contract at the Imperial Theater involved her in a large sum of money by way of forfeit, but this she paid ungrudgingly, feeling as if it were the first step along the new road of renunciation she designed to tread.

To the manager she offered no further explanation than that she proposed to give up dancing, "at any rate for a

year or so," and, although he was nearly distracted over the idea, he found his arguments and persuasions were no more effective than those King Canute optimistically addressed to the encroaching waves. The utmost concession he could extract from Magda was her assent to giving a farewell appearance—for which occasion the astute manager privately decided to quadruple the price of the seats. He only wished it were possible to quadruple the seating capacity of the theater as well!

Meanwhile Gillian, whose normal, healthy young mind recoiled violently from the idea of Magda's self-imposed year of discipline, had secretly resolved upon making a final desperate venture in the hope of straightening out the tangle of her friend's life. She would go herself and see Michael and plead with him. Surely, if he loved Magda as he had once seemed to do, he could not remain obdurate when he realized how bitterly she had repented—and how much she loved him!

It was not easy for Gillian to come to this decision. She held very strong opinions on the subject of the rights of the individual to manage his own affairs without interference, and as she passed out of the busy main street into the quiet little Old-World court where Michael had his rooms and studio she felt as guilty as a small boy caught trespassing in an orchard.

The landlady who opened the door in response to her somewhat timid ring regarded her with a curiously surprised expression when she inquired if Mr. Quarrington were in.

"I'll see, miss," she answered non-committally, "if you'll step inside."

The unusual appearance of the big double studio where she was left to wait puzzled Gillian. All the familiar tapestries and cushions and rare knickknacks which wontedly converted the farther end of it into a charming reception room were gone. The chairs were covered in

plain holland, the piano sheeted. Even the big easel, standing like a tall cross in the cold north light, was swathed in a dust sheet. Gillian's heart misgave her. Was she too late? Had Michael gone away?

A moment later a quick, resolute footstep reassured her. The door opened and Michael himself came in. He paused on the threshold as he perceived who his visitor was, then came forward and shook hands with his usual grave courtesy. After that, he seemed to wait as if for some explanation of her visit.

Gillian found herself nervously unready. All the little opening speeches she had prepared for the interview deserted her suddenly, driven away by her shocked realization of the transformation which the few days since she had last seen him had wrought in the man beside her.

His face was lined and worn. The gray eyes were sunken and burned with a strange, bitter brilliance. Only the dogged, outthrust jaw remained the same as ever, obstinate and unconquerable. Twice she essayed to speak and twice failed. The third time the words came stumblingly.

"Michael, what—what does it mean—all this?" She indicated the holland-sheeted studio with a gesture.

"It means that I'm going away," he replied. "I'm packing now. I leave England to-morrow."

"You mustn't go!"

The words broke from her imperatively, like a mandate.

He glanced at her quickly, and into his eyes came a look of comprehension.

"You're a good friend," he said quietly. "But I must go."

"No, no, you mustn't! Listen!"

"Nothing can alter my decision," he interrupted in a tone of absolute finality. "Nothing you could say, Gillian—so don't say it."

"But I must!" she insisted. "Oh, Michael, I'm not going to pretend that

Magda hasn't been to blame—that it isn't all terrible! But if you saw her—now—you'd *have* to forgive her and love her again." She spoke with a simple sincerity which was infinitely appealing.

"I've never ceased to love her," he replied, still in that quiet voice of repressed determination.

"Then if you love her, can't you forgive her? She's had everything against her from the beginning, both temperament and upbringing, and on top of that there's been the wild success she's had as a dancer. You can't judge her by ordinary standards of conduct. *You can't!* It isn't fair!"

"I don't presume to judge her," Michael answered icily. "I simply say I can't marry her."

"If you could see her now, Michael—" Her voice shook a little. "It hurts me to see Magda—like that. She's broken."

"And my sister, June, is dead," he said in level, unemotional tones.

Gillian wrung her hands.

"But even so! Magda didn't kill her, Michael. She couldn't tell—she didn't know that June—" She halted, faltering into silence.

"That June was soon to have a child?" Michael finished her sentence for her. "No. But she knew she loved her husband. And she stole him from her. When I think of it all, of June—little June— And Storran—gone under! Oh, what's the use of talking?" he went on savagely. "You know—and I know—that there's nothing left. Nothing!"

"If you loved her, Michael—"

"If I loved her?" he broke out stormily. "You're not a man, and you don't know what it means to want the woman you love night and day, to ache for her in every fiber of your body—and to know that you can't have her and keep your self-respect!"

"Oh—self-respect!" There was a note of contempt in Gillian's voice. "If

you set your 'self-respect' above your love—"

"You don't understand!" he interrupted violently. "You're a woman and you can't understand! I must honor the woman I love! It's the kernel of the whole thing. I must look up to her, not down!"

Gillian clasped her hands.

"Oh!" she said in a low, vehement voice. "I don't think we women *want* to be 'looked up to.' It sets us so far away. We're not goddesses. We're only women, Michael, with all our little weaknesses just the same as men. And we want the men who love us to be comrades, not worshipers. Good pals, who'll forgive us and help us up when we tumble down, just as we'd be ready to forgive them and help them up. Can't you—can't you do that for Magda?"

"No," he said shortly. "I can't."

Gillian was at the end of her resources. She would not tell him that Magda proposed joining the Sisters of Penitence for a year. Somehow she felt she would not wish him to know this or to be influenced by it.

She had made her appeal to Michael himself, to his sheer love for the woman he had intended to make his wife. And she had failed because the man was too bitter, too sore, to see clearly through the pain which blinded him.

His voice, curt and clipped, broke the silence which had fallen.

"Have you said all you came to say?" he asked with frigid politeness.

"All," she returned sadly.

She moved slowly toward the door.

"Good-by," she said, holding out her hand.

He took it and held it in his. For a moment the eyes softened a little.

"I'm sorry I can't do what you ask," he said abruptly.

Gillian opened her lips to speak, but no words came. Instead, a sudden lump rose in her throat, choking her into silence, at the sight of the man's wrung

face, with its bitter, pain-ridden eyes and the jaw which was squared implacably against love and forgiveness, and against his own overwhelming desire.

CHAPTER XXIX.

As Gillian mingled once more with the throng on the pavements she felt curiously unwilling to return home. She had set out from Friars' Holm so full of hope in her errand! It had seemed impossible that she could fail, and she had been almost unconsciously looking forward to seeing Magda's wan, strained face relax into half-incredulous delight as she confided in her the news that Michael was as eager and longing for a reconciliation as she herself.

And instead—this! This utter, hopeless failure to move him one jot. Only the memory of the man's stern, desperately unhappy eyes curbed the hot tide of her anger against him for his iron refusal.

He still loved Magda, so he said. And, indeed, Gillian believed it. But—love! It was not love as she and Tony Grey had understood it—simple, forgiving, and wholly trustful. It seemed to her as if Michael and Magda were both wandering in a dim twilight of misunderstanding, neither of them able to see that there was only one thing for them to do if they were ever to find happiness again. They must thrust the past behind them, with all its bitterness and failures and mistakes, and go forward, hand in hand, in search of the light. Love would surely lead them to it eventually.

Yet this was the last thing either of them seemed able to think of doing. Magda was determined to spend the sweetness of her youth in making reparation for the past, while Michael was torn by bitterly conflicting feelings, his passionate love for Magda warring with his innate recoil from all that she had

done and with his loyalty to his dead sister.

Gillian sighed as she threaded her way slowly along the crowded street. The lights of a well-known tea shop beckoned invitingly and, only too willing to postpone the moment of her return home, she turned in between its plate-glass doors.

They swung together behind her, dulling the rumble of the traffic, while all around uprose the gay hum of conversation, and the chink of cups and saucers mingling with the rhythmic melodies which issued from a cleverly concealed orchestra.

The place was very crowded. For a moment it seemed to Gillian as if there were no vacant seats. Then she espied an empty table for two in a distant corner and hastily made her way thither. She had barely given her order to the waitress when the doors parted again to admit some one else, a man this time.

The new arrival paused, as Gillian herself had done, to search out a seat. Then, noting the empty place at her table, he came quickly toward it.

Gillian was idly scanning the list of marvelous little cakes on the menu, and her first cognizance of the newcomer's approach was the vision of a strong, masculine hand gripping the back of the chair opposite her preparatory to pulling it out from under the table.

"I'm afraid there's no other vacant seat," he was beginning apologetically. But at the sound of his voice Gillian's eyes flew up from that virile-looking hand to the face of its owner and a low cry of surprise broke from her lips.

"Dan Storran!"

Simultaneously the man gave utterance to her own name.

Gillian stared at him stupidly. Could this really be Dan Storran—Storran of Stockleigh?

The alteration in him was immense. He looked ten years older. An habitual stoop had lessened his apparent

height, and the dark, kinky hair was streaked with gray. The golden-brown tan bestowed by an English sun had been exchanged for the sallow skin of a man who had lived hard in a hot country, and the face was thin and heavily lined. Only the eyes of periwinkle blue remained to remind Gillian of the splendid young giant she had known at Ashcombe, and even they were changed and held the cynical weariness of a man who has eaten of Dead Sea fruit and found it bitter to the taste.

There were other changes, too. Storran of Stockleigh was as civilized, his clothes and general appearance as essentially "right" as those of the men around him. All suggestion of the "cave man from the backwoods," as Lady Arabella had termed him, was gone.

"I didn't know you were in England," said Gillian at last.

"I landed yesterday," he answered briefly.

"You've been in South America, haven't you?"

She spoke mechanically. There seemed something forced and artificial about this exchange of platitudes between herself and the man who had figured so disastrously in Magda's life. Without warning he brought the conversation suddenly back to realities.

"Yes. I was in Frisco when my wife died. Since then I've been half over the world."

Behind the harshly uttered statement Gillian could sense the unspeakable bitterness of the man's soul. It hurt her, calling forth her quick sympathy just as the sight of some maimed and wounded animal would have done.

"Oh!" she said, a sensitive quiver in her voice. "I was so sorry—so terribly sorry—to hear about June. We hadn't heard. We only knew quite recently." Her face clouded as she reflected on the tragic happenings with which the news had been accompanied.

At this moment a waitress paused at Storran's side and he gave his order. Then, looking curiously at Gillian, he said:

"What did you hear? Just that she died when our child was born, I suppose?"

Gillian's absolute honesty of soul could not acquiesce, though it would have been infinitely the easier course.

"No," she said, flushing a little and speaking very low. "We heard that she might have lived if—if she had only been—happier."

He nodded silently, rather as if this was the answer he had anticipated. Presently he spoke abruptly:

"Does Miss Vallincourt know that?"

Gillian hesitated. Then, taking her courage in both hands she told him quietly and composedly the whole story of the engagement and its rupture, and let him understand just precisely what June's death, owing to the special circumstances in which it had occurred, had meant for Magda of retribution and of heartbreak.

Storran listened without comment, in his eyes an odd look of concentration. The waitress dexterously slid a tray in front of him and he poured himself out a cup of tea mechanically, but he made no attempt to drink it. When Gillian ceased, his face showed no sign of softening. It looked hard and very weary. His strong fingers moved restlessly, crumbling one of the small cakes on the plate in front of him.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small," he quoted at last quietly.

Gillian met his harshly cynical glance with one of brave defiance.

"I don't think God's mills have anything to do with it," she said swiftly. "He'd understand all the excuses and allowances that should be made for her better even than I do. And I shouldn't want to punish Magda. I'd make her—happy. She's never known what it

means to be really happy. Success and gayety aren't *happiness*."

"And you?" he asked quickly.

There was a soft and wonderful shining in the brown eyes which were lifted to his.

"I had one year of utter happiness," she answered gently. "And I've got Coppertop—so I can't ever be quite unhappy."

"If there were more women like you—" he began abruptly.

She shook her head.

"No, no," she said, smiling a little. "If there were more men like Tony! You men are so hard—so cruelly hard!"

He looked at her very directly.

"Haven't I the right to be?" he demanded bitterly.

"Ah! Forgive me!" Gillian spoke with an accent of self-reproach. "I'd forgotten you still—care."

"For Magda?" He laughed shortly. "No. That's dead, thank God! I killed it. Worked it out of my system in Frisco," he said, with exceeding bitterness. "Then I got the news of June's death. Her sister wrote me. Told me she died because she'd no longer any wish to live. That sobered me—brought me back to my senses. There was a good deal more to the letter; my sister-in-law didn't let me down lightly. I've had to pay for that summer at Stockleigh. And now Magda's paying. Well, that seems to square things somehow."

"Oh, you are brutal!" broke out Gillian.

His eyes, hard as steel and as unyielding, met hers.

"Am I?" he asked indifferently. "Perhaps I am."

This was a very different Dan from the impetuous, hot-headed Dan of for-

mer times. Gillian found his calm ruthlessness difficult to understand, and yet, realizing all that he had suffered, she could not but condone it to a certain extent.

When at last she rose to go, he detained her a moment.

"I am remaining in England now. I should like to see you sometimes. May I?"

She hesitated. Then something appealed in the tired eyes which impelled her answer.

"If you wish," she said gently.

Back once more in the street, she made her way as quickly as possible to the nearest tube station, in order to reach it before the usual evening crowd of homeward-wending clerks and typists poured into the thoroughfares from a thousand open office doors. But as soon as she was safely seated in the train her thoughts reverted to the two strange interviews in which she had taken part that afternoon.

She felt very low-spirited. Since she had seen and talked with the two men in whose lives Magda had played so big a part, she was oppressed with a sense of the utter hopelessness of trying to put matters right. Things must take their course now, must drive on to whatever end, bitter or sweet, lay hidden in the womb of fate.

She had tried to stem the current of affairs, but she had proved as powerless to deflect it as a dried stick tossed onto a river in spate. And now, whether the end were ultimate happiness or hopeless irretrievable disaster, Michael and Magda must still fight their way toward it, each alone, by the dim light of that "blind understanding" which is all that Destiny vouchsafes.

TO BE CONCLUDED IN THE APRIL NUMBER.



The First Newspaper

A SORT OF ALLEGORY

By Stephen Leacock

Author of "Nonsense Novels," "Literary Lapses," etc.

HOW likes it you, Master Brenton?" said the brawny journeyman, spreading out the news sheet on a smooth oaken table, where it lay under the light of a leaded window.

"A marvelous fair sheet," murmured Brenton Caxton, seventh of the name. "Let me but adjust my glasses and peruse it further lest haply there be still aught in it that smacks of error."

"It needs not," said the journeyman; "tis the fourth time already from the press."

"Nay, nay, Nicholas," answered Master Brenton softly, as he adjusted his great horn-rimmed spectacles, and bent his head over the broad damp news sheet before him. "Let us grudge no care in this. The venture is a new one, and, meseems, a very parlous thing withal. 'Tis a venture that may easily fail and carry down our fortunes with it, but at least let it not be said that it failed for want of pains in the doing."

"Fail quotha!" said a third man, who had not yet spoken, old, tall, and sour of visage, and wearing a leathern printer's apron. He had moved over from the farther side of the room where a little group of apprentices stood beside the wooden presses that occupied the corner, and he was looking over the shoulder of Master Brenton Caxton. "How can it do aught else? 'Tis a mad folly. Mark you, Master Brenton and Master Nick, I have said it from the first and let the blame be none of mine. 'Tis a mad thing you do here. See here," he went on, turning and waving his hand, "this vast room, these great presses, yonder benches and tools, all new, yonder vats of ink

straight out of Flanders, how think you you can recover the cost of all this out of yonder poor sheet? Five and forty years have I followed this mystery of printing, ever since thy grandfather's day, Master Brenton, and never have I seen the like. What needed this great chamber when your grandfather and father were content with but a garret space, and yonder presses that can turn off four score copies in the compass of a single hour? 'Tis a mad folly, I say."

The moment was an interesting one. The speakers were in a great room with a tall ceiling traversed by blackened beams. From the street below there came dimly through the closed casements the sound of the rumbling traffic and the street cries of the London of the seventeenth century. Two vast presses, of such colossal size that their wooden levers would tax the strength of the stoutest apprentice, were ranged against the farther wall. About the room, spread out on oaken chairs and wooden benches, were flat boxes filled with leaden type, freshly molten, and a great pile of paper, larger than a man could lift, stood in a corner.

Master Brenton Caxton turned upon the last speaker the mild, undisturbed look of the eye that sees far across the present into the years to come.

"Nay, Edward," he said, "you have labored overmuch in the past and see not into the future. You think this chamber too great for our purpose? I tell you the time will come when not this room alone, but three or four such will be needed for our task. Already I have it in my mind that I will divide even this room into portions, with walls

shrewdly placed through its length and breadth, so that each that worketh shall sit as it were in his own chamber, and there shall stand one at the door, and whosoever cometh, to whatever part of our task his business appertains, he shall forthwith be brought to the room of him that hath charge of it. Cometh he with a madrigal or other light poesy that he would set out in the press, he shall find one that hath charge of such matters, and can discern true from false. Or cometh he with news of aught that happens in the realm, so shall he be brought instanter to the room of him that recordeth such events. Or if so be he would write a discourse on what seemeth him some wise conceit touching the public concerns, he shall find to his hand a convenient desk with ink and quills, and all that he needeth to set it straightway on paper; thus there will be a great abundance of written matter to our hand so that not many days shall elapse after one of our news sheets goes abroad before there shall be matter enough to fill another."

"Days!" said the aged printer, "Think you you can fill one of these news sheets in a few days? Where indeed if you search the whole realm will you find talk enough in a single week to fill out this great sheet half an ell wide!"

"Aye, days indeed!" broke in Master Nicholas, the younger journeyman. "Master Brenton speaks truth, or less than truth. For not days indeed but in the compass of a single day, I warrant you, shall we find the matter withal." Master Nicholas spoke with the same enthusiasm as his chief, but with less of the dreamer in his voice and eye, and with more of the swift eagerness of the practical man. "Fill it indeed," he went on, "why, gad zoinks, man! Who knoweth what happenings there are and what not till one essays the gathering of them? And should it chance that there is nothing of greater

import, no boar hunt of his majesty to record, nor the news of some great entertainment by one of the lords of the court, then will we put in lesser matters, aye whatever comes to hand—the talk of his majesty's burgesses in the parliament, or any such things."

"Hear him!" sneered the printer, "the talk of his majesty's burgesses in Westminster forsooth! And what clerk or learned person would care to read of such?" Or think you that his majesty's chamberlain would long bear that such idle chatter should be bruited abroad? If you can find no worthier thing for this, our news sheet, than the talk of the burgesses, then shall it fail indeed. Had it been the speech of the king's great barons and the abbots, 'twere different. But dost fancy that the great barons would allow that their weighty discourse be reduced to common speech so that even the vulgar may read it and haply here and there fathom their very thought itself—and the abbots, the great prelates—to submit their ideas to the vulgar hand of a common printer, framing them into mere sentences? 'Tis unthinkable that they would sanction it!"

"Aye," murmured Caxton, in his dreaming voice, "the time shall come, Master Edward, when they will not only sanction it but seek it."

"Look you," broke in Master Nick, "let us have done with this talk of whether there be enough happenings. If there be not enough, then will I *make things happen*. What is easier than to tell of happenings out of the realm of which no man can know—some tale of the Grand Turk and the war that he makes, or some happenings in the New Land found by Master Columbus? Aye," he went on, warming to his words, and not knowing that he embodied in himself the first birth on earth of the telegraphic editor, "and why not? One day we write it out on our sheet 'the Grand Turk maketh disastrous war

on the Bulgars of the North, and hath burnt divers of their villages.' And that hath no sooner gone forth than we print another sheet, saying: 'It would seem that the villages be not burnt but only scorched, nor doth it appear that the Turk burnt them, but that the Bulgars burnt divers villages of the Turk, and is sitting now in his mosque in the city of Hadrian.' Then shall all men run to and fro, and read the sheet, and question and ask: Is it thus? And is it thus? and by very uncertainty of circumstance they shall demand the more curiously to see the news sheet and read it."

"Nay, nay, Master Nick," said Brenton firmly, "that will I never allow. Let us make it to ourselves a maxim that all that shall be said in this news sheet, or 'news paper,' as my conceit would fain call it—for be it not made of paper—shall be of ascertained verity and fact indisputable. Should the Grand Turk make war, and should the rumor of it come to these isles, then will we say: 'The Turk maketh war,' and should the Turk be at peace, then we will say: 'The Turk it doth appear is now at peace.' And should no news come, then we shall say: 'In good sooth we know not whether the Turk destroyeth the Bulgars or whether he doth not, for while some hold that he harasseth them sorely, others have it that he harasseth them not. Whereby we are sore put to it to know whether there be war or peace, nor do we desire to vex the patience of those who read by any further discourse on the matter, other than to say that we ourselves are in doubt what be and what be not truth, nor will we any further speak of it, other than this.'"

Those about Caxton listened with awe to this speech. They did not know—they could not know—that here was the birth of the Leading Article, but there was something in the strangely fascinating way in which their chief enlarged upon his own ignorance that

foreshadowed to the meanest intelligence the possibilities of the future.

Nicholas shook his head.

"'Tis a poor plan, Master Brenton," he said. "The folk wish news, give them the news. The more thou givest them the better pleased they are, and thus doth the news sheet move from hand to hand till it may be said, if I, too, may coin a phrase, to increase vastly its 'circulation.'"

"In sooth," said Master Brenton, looking at Nicholas with a quiet expression that was not exempt from a certain slyness, "there I do hold thou art in the wrong, even as a matter of craft or policie. For it seems to me that if our paper speaketh first this and then that, but hath no fixed certainty of truth, sooner or later will all its talk seem vain, and no man will heed it. But if it speaks always the truth, then sooner or later shall all come to believe it, and say of any happening: 'It standeth written in the paper, therefore it is so.' And here I charge you all that have any part in this new venture," continued Master Brenton, looking about the room at the listening faces, and speaking with great seriousness, "let us lay it to our hearts that our maxim shall be truth and truth alone. Let no man set his hand to aught that shall go upon our presses save only that which is assured truth. In this way shall our venture ever be pleasing to the Most High, and I do verily believe"—and here Caxton's voice sank lower, as if he were thinking aloud—"in the long run it will be mighty good for our circulation."

The speaker paused. Then turning to the broad sheet before him, he began to scan its columns with his eye. The others stood watching him as he read.

"What is this, Master Edward?" he queried presently. "Here I see in this first induct, or column, as one name it, the word 'King' fairly and truly spelled. Lower down it standeth

'Kyng,' and yet further in the second induct 'Kynge,' and in the last induct where there is talk of His Majesty's marvelous skill in the French game of palm or tennis, lo, the word stands 'Quhyngge!' How sayest thou?"

"Would'st have it written always in but one and the same way?" asked the printer in astonishment.

"Aye, truly," said Caxton.

"With never any choice or variation to suit the fancy of him who reads so that he who likes it written 'King' may see it so and yet also he who would prefer it written in a freer style, as 'Quhyngge,' may also find it so, and thus both be pleased!"

"That will I never have!" said Master Brenton firmly. "Dost not remember, friend, the old tale in the fabula of *Æsop* of him who would please all men? Here will I make another maxim for our news paper. All men we cannot please, for in pleasing one belike we run counter to another. Let us set our hand to write always without fear. Let us seek favor with none. Always in our news sheet will we seek to speak dutifully and with all reverence of the king his majesty; let us also speak with all respect and commendation of his majesty's great prelates and nobles, for are they not the exalted of the land? Also I would have it that we say nothing harsh against our wealthy merchants and burghers, for hath not the Lord prospered them in their substance? Yea, friend, let us speak ever well of the King, the clergy, the nobility, and of all persons of wealth and substantial holdings. But beyond this," here Brenton Caxton's eye flashed, "let us speak with utter fearlessness of all men. So shall we be, if I may borrow a mighty good word from Tacitus, his *Annals*, of a complete independence, hanging on to no man. In fact, our venture shall be an independent newspaper."

The listeners felt an instinctive awe at the words, and again a strange pre-

science of the future made itself felt in every mind. Here for the first time in history was being laid down that fine, fearless creed that has made the independent press what it is.

Meantime, Caxton continued to glance his eye over the news sheet, murmuring his comments on what he saw: "Ah! vastly fine, Master Nicholas—this of the sailing of his majesty's ships for Spain—and this, too, of the Doge of Venice, his death, 'tis brave reading and maketh a fair discourse. Here, also, this likes me, 'tis shrewdly devised"—and here he placed his finger on a particular spot in the news sheet—"here in speaking of the strange mishap of my Lord Arundel, thou usest a great S for strange, and setteth it in a line all by itself whereby the mind of him that reads is suddenly awakened, alarmed as it were by a bell in the night. 'Tis good. 'Tis well. But mark you, friend Nicholas, try it not too often, nor use your great letters too easily. In the case of my Lord Arundel, it is seemly, but for a mishap to a lesser person let it stand in a more modest fashion."

There was a pause. Then suddenly Caxton looked up again.

"What manner of tale is this! What strange thing is here! I'faith, Master Nicholas, whence hast thou so marvelous a thing! The whole world must know of it. Harken ye all to this:

"Let all men that be troubled of aches, spavins, rheums, boils, maladies of the spleen or humours of the blood, come forthwith to the sign of the Red Lantern in East Cheap. There shall they find one that hath a marvelous remedy for all such ailments, brought with great danger and perils of the journey from a distant land. This wondrous balm shall straightway make the sick to be well and the lame to walk. Rubbed on the eye it restoreth sight, and applied to the ear it reviveth the hearing. 'Tis the sole invention of Doktor Gustavus Friedman, some time of Göttingen and brought by him hitherward out of the sheer pity of his heart for them that be afflicted, nor shall any other fee be

asked for it, save only such a light and tender charge as shall defray the cost of Doktor Friedman, his coming and going."

Caxton paused and gazed at Master Nicholas in wonder.

"Whence hadst thou this?"

"I had it of a chapman, or traveling doctor, that was most urgent that we should set it forth straightway on the press."

"And is it true?" asked Caxton. Nicholas laughed lightly.

"True or false, I know not," he said, "but the fellow was so curious that we should print it that he gave me two golden laurels and a new sovereign on the sole understanding that we should set it forth in print."

There was deep silence.

"He *payeth* to have it printed!" said Caxton, deeply impressed.

"Aye," said Master Nicholas, "he *payeth*, and will *pay more*. The fellow hath other balms equally potent. Of all these he would admonish, or shall I say advert, the public?"

"So," said Caxton thoughtfully, "he wishes to make, if I may borrow a phrase of Albertus Magnus, an advertisement of his goods. He *payeth* us. We advert the goods. Forthwith all men buy them. Then hath he more money. He *payeth* us again. We advert the goods more and still he *payeth* us. That would seem to me, friend Nick, a mighty good busyness for us."

"So it is," rejoined Nicholas, "and after him others will come to advert other wares until belike a large part of our news sheet—who knows? the whole of it perhaps—shall be made up in the merry guise of advertisements."

Caxton was silent in deep thought.

"But, Master Caxton," cried the voice of a young apprentice, "is this tale true?"

"What sayest thou, Warwick?" said the master printer, almost sternly.

"Good master, is the tale of the wondrous balm true?"

"Boy," said Caxton, "Master Nicholas hath even said, we know not if it be true."

"But didst thou not charge us," pleaded the boy, "that all that went under our hand into the press should be truth, and truth alone?"

"I did," said Caxton thoughtfully, "but I spoke perhaps somewhat in overhaste. I see that we must here distinguish. Whether this is true or not we cannot tell. But it is *paid for* and that lifts it, as we should say, out of the domain of truth. The very fact that it is paid for giveth it, as it were, a new form of merit, a verity altogether its own."

"Aye, aye," said Nicholas, with a twinkle in his shrewd eyes.

"Indeed so," said Caxton, "and here let us make to ourselves another and a final maxim of guidance. All things that any man will pay for, these we will print, whether true or not, for that doth not concern us. But if one cometh here with any strange tale of a remedy or aught else and wishes us to make advertisement of it and hath no money to pay for it, then shall he be cast forth out of this officina, or office, if I may call it so, neck and crop into the street. Nay, I will have me one of great strength ever at the outer door ready for such castings."

A murmur of approval went round the group.

Caxton would have spoken further but at this moment the sound of a great bell was heard booming in the street.

"'Tis Big Ben," said Caxton, "ringing out the hour of noon. Quick, all of you to your tasks. Lay me the forms on the press and speed me the work. We start here a great adventure. Mark well the maxims I have given, and God speed our task."

And in another hour or so, the apprentice boys of the master printer were calling in the streets the sale of the first English newspaper.



WHAT THE STARS SAY

By Madame Renée Longuille

To the Heavens above us O look and behold
The Planets that love us, all harnessed in gold!
What chariots, what horses against us shall bide
While the stars in their courses do fight on our side?

RUDYARD KIPLING.

HOW TO READ YOUR OWN HOROSCOPE

LESSON X.

WHEN Venus, the planet that symbolizes the love nature and good fortune in life, is poised in the celestial sign Aquarius at the moment when the breath of life first enters the body, much good in the way of soul growth is promised. The native with this position is sincere and honest in all his attachments, even though they are not all made public. Some may be of a kind which he feels would be criticized by those natures coming under a coarser sign, so he will be reserved about the romantic and secret unions he regards as sacred. Strangers take readily to these Venus-in-Aquarius natures, who are always considered "good mixers." Friends are numerous, and usually sincere and honest, never quite understanding the Aquarian nature which so often possesses just the right amount of reserve to make itself fascinating or, at any rate, always interesting. This native may possibly inherit money, or good fortune may come through some large, humanitarian position. This is not the nature that marries for money, position, or any other studied advantage, as one of the former sign, Capricorn, might do, but for the

highest and purest love and soul communion.

Pisces, the twelfth and last sign of the zodiac, lending its color to Venus, indicates a most sympathetic, humane nature. The soul is full of pity and compassion for all creatures weak or unfortunate. The nature is intuitive and psychic, sensing the need of help where others might overlook it. This type of person will often find success and employment in hospitals, institutions, or among the unfortunate masses of humanity as social workers or nurses. It often happens that, although he seems to possess discrimination in love affairs, his affections may be centered for years upon a person not in the least worthy of his consideration. The imagination will probably be developed to a marked degree and the life be spent in building one air castle after another untiringly. If he lets his mediumistic qualities help him in business, gain and good fortune will surely be his.

MARS IN THE VARIOUS SIGNS.

The red, fiery star we see shining so brilliantly in the heavens is the planet

Mars. As Venus, and her position in the universe, influences the love nature of each individual, so Mars rules over the animal nature. Mars gives force and strength, and whether it be for good or evil depends upon the sign and house in which it is found at the moment of birth, and also on the rays or aspects it receives from another planet. It is often considered a malefic influence, but what futile, weak-kneed creatures we would be without the force and fire of this planet to help us use the influences from other sources! Mars gives energy and ambition, and when it is prominent on a map of life the position shows the manner in which the native will spend or control this influence.

Thus, if these vibrations come through the celestial sign Aries, where Mars is "at home" and therefore not handicapped, the nature is positive, energetic, and impulsive. This type of native will at all times be employed, and hard work will generally put him at the head of any enterprise with which he is connected. Aries rules the head, and Mars in this sign, if no subduing aspects are communicated, may cause mental trouble from overwork, insomnia, or neuralgia. It is said that a person with Mars thus placed has great personal magnetism and the power to heal disease in others. The thoughts may follow along religious lines, in which the native may become very enthusiastic.

Mars in Taurus augurs a firm, stolid, practical force. Money will be easy come, easy go," and the rainy day may find this type of person without a shelter. Friends may, however, come to his assistance at the time of need, especially one who may be very well known. All through his life many people may ridicule him and thwart his well-made plans in business. There is likelihood of a very early love affair ending in a tragic manner, and the native's reputa-

tion and honor may suffer. Relatives are likely to be a handicap instead of a help. It would be wise for one with this Mars-in-Taurus combination on his chart of life to think twice before he enters a lawsuit.

Mars in the sign Gemini indicates a person possessing a quick, keen mind. He will always be investigating subjects of mystery. The speech may be peculiar or have an impediment, such as a tongue-tied condition or a lisp. There is probability of more than one marriage, or of two love affairs carried on at the same time. Lung troubles may cause death.

When Mars is in Cancer the native may work industriously for the home, but fate will seem to be against him and there will be a constant desire for change. Worries and anxieties will follow the family. Often this position of Mars foretells the loss of a parent, probably the mother, at a very tender age. It is not a very happy position for marriage. Occult subjects may interest this type of person, but an underlying fear or dread will keep him from investigating very far this mystical realm. Success may come through business connected with traveling and the public.

The sign Leo with Mars poised therein indicates a bold, daring, impulsive nature. The love affairs will be most ardent and intense, but, although the love is not one-sided, there is possibility of some serious trouble in connection with the heart and its affections. This Mars-in-Leo type of person usually "dies in harness," laboring up to the last moment of life. This native's views on life and all other subjects are, for the most part, broad and free. He is capable of guiding many people and being at the head of affairs in business, but it is as a musician that he should make his mark in the world. If Mars is afflicted in this sign by another planet, a child may be the cause of distress.

Mars in Virgo describes a critical, sharp, keen nature. The occupation or business of this native will be pursued far from his place of birth. He does not show the independent, original force of the native with Mars in Leo, but succeeds when he is directed by another, or has some one to look to for decisions on problems that confront him. Many obstacles will be encountered in his climb to success, the most important being the death of friends and advisers. He need never be ill if he is careful of his diet and studies the laws of hygiene.

When Mars is found in the sign Libra the native's temperament is refined and very idealistic. His love is ardent, leading to a hasty marriage tie, which may be severed through death. Most of his friends and acquaintances are of an artistic or religious type. The occupation will be refined and gain will be sure, but bad servants and inferiors will cause him to part with much of his money. He has keen perception, and eventually outdoes his competitors and enemies. The last of life brings many perplexities in the domestic sphere, and much responsibility.

Mars rules Scorpio, therefore he is at home in this sign and throws off his energy unhampered. The native with this position of Mars on his nativity may be proud and materialistic. It will never take him long to decide a question. His business will be connected in some way with secrets of his own, or perhaps of others, or the government. He may travel often by water where mystery is concerned. A real Captain Kidd, this native could be, especially if the Martial force were used in the wrong direction. A really clever, scheming intellect is shown by this position. Marriage will probably bring financial gain. A happy end cannot be predicted. It may be very sudden and probably caused indirectly by the native himself.

Sagittarius is not a particularly fortunate sign to hold Mars. The native will be of a restless, impulsive temperament. His speech will be quick and short, wasting no words in conveying his ideas. He will also show great enthusiasm in his work or occupation, but not always good judgment—a lack which handicaps this native all through his life. His intuitions will bring fortune and he will ever delight in foretelling events. Enemies will try to hurt his reputation with uncomplimentary stories, and they may succeed in spite of his entire innocence, the world refusing to believe that the tales are "made up out of whole cloth." There is a strong likelihood of money being left to him by some distant relative. Gain may also come through several marriages, but anxiety may be felt regarding the health and welfare of his immediate family. It will be very hard for this native to live in one place very long, for wanderlust will be strong in his nature. At the close of his life many interesting experiences will be his.

When manifesting his force through the sign Capricorn, Mars acts in quite a different manner than when in the preceding sign, Sagittarius. Here the temperament will be slow but sure. A great deal of ambition will be latent in this native, but in all ways and means of life he will be "from Missouri." He must be shown; but once the knowledge is acquired, it is his for life and ready to be used at the right time for the benefit of humanity as well as the native himself. He is capable of great responsibility and usually is found in a high position, especially late in life. Duty is his one devotion and sooner or later he will be appreciated for his worth. He may live to see his relatives all go before him, but no legacies or windfalls may be expected. There are indications of a very early "affair," probably with some one unworthy of consideration. Marriage will probably

mark a decided turning point in the life of this Mars-in-Capricorn native and will greatly affect his last days. This is not a fortunate position when considering the native's parents. They will treat him coldly, or an unhappy separation will cause much distress.

Answers to Correspondents.

MR. A. H. D., Born Thursday, June 21, 1888, Los Angeles, California.—You were born when the Sun was only twenty-eight minutes in Cancer, the Moon well in Scorpio. Many times in life you have been considered rather peculiar and with reason, but this peculiarity lies in the fact that you are not so weak in character as the general run of your brethren on this earth. You have many characteristics all your own, and are true and outspoken in your opinions, not always "on the fence" in life's disputes. You have been living through many obstacles and oppositions this last year, but in glancing back in your life I find that you have had two extraordinarily fortunate periods—one around the age of twenty-seven, of which I hope you took advantage. May I also remind you of the period which began when you were about eighteen, and lasted three years? This was surely a character-building time. However, 1921 will bring you much in the way of inspiration.

MISS R. C. T., Born April 10, 1885, between two and four o'clock p. m., New York.—The Sun was in Aries and the Moon in Aquarius, a good combination. There is a love of music, art, and refinement in your make-up, and you are thoughtful and inclined to study situations and love truth in all things. A peculiarly strong influence has already entered your life in these last few years, which is now becoming more or less distressing. I do not see how you have escaped marriage so far. Next year you may experience a change. Your affairs will be of a dual character, and you will be very perplexed, not knowing which way to turn. Go slowly, I advise you, and everything will work out satisfactorily to your best interests, although at the time you may not think so.

F. A. B., Born Sunday, May 30, 1886, French Kongo, Equatorial West Africa.—The aspects at your birth gave you a rather firm character, coupled, however, with an inclination toward obstinacy and self-will at times. You are also inclined to be rather reserved, preferring to let others talk, al-

though great diplomacy is shown in your nature. I think you ought to make a success in life as a singer. I must warn you to take care of your health this next year, or around the age of thirty-five, when your vitality is low and you are inclined to worry. If your father is alive, he must also guard his health. A rather strange life is just ahead of you for the next seven or eight years. I hope you will put your best foot forward and keep a steady grip on your feelings and emotions, refusing to let them become depressed. A tremendous influence is about to enter your life in this period—an influence which I cannot say is for your happiness.

H. B., Born May 23, 1894, Cleveland, Ohio.—Please try very hard to dismiss that fear and dread from your mind which is making your life a burden. The power that put you here will never desert you. We all get what we deserve, so if we are not satisfied the only way is to work hard to deserve more, which we will surely receive. I find that the last of your life will be very much better than the first half. After you are thirty-eight your good luck and rise in the world begins, when you will be extremely happy and prosperous. So begin now to be happy and throw off dull care in anticipation of this wonderful period just ahead.

E. G. H., Born Sunday, September 18, 1887, at about twelve noon, Newark, New Jersey.—You have good reasoning power and a well-balanced temperament, there being, moreover, a possibility of clairvoyance cultivated at some time in your life. You would be successful along some line of artistic work or in partnership. Marriage is not strongly marked on your map of life. The powers evidently wished you to concentrate your wonderful mental qualities on the pursuit of art, which I hope you have done. But, however, always remember the old adage: "It is never too late to begin."

MISS G. C. C., Born Saturday, November 26, 1898, about eleven a. m., Belmont, California.—If your time is correct it shows you to be of a kind and loving disposition, with a great sense of justice and a keen appreciation of social life and worldly success. You are fitted by character to hold a good position. Beware of being oversensitive, impulsive, or eccentric, or of being led into a peculiar situation with any one. Love affairs do not bring the happiness that might be wished for, and are delayed until after you are twenty-eight at least.



The Shadow

By

Alice L. Tildesley

Author of "Lewis Dare," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. B. ASPELL

Homeless, they fled from The Shadow, a shadow which vanished only when the clear light of an explanation turned its blackness into sunshine.

SINCE they had been able to remember, Don and Charlotte had felt the joyless presence of the shadow. A terrible thing, the shadow, endlessly in pursuit of their pretty mother.

It was Don who had named it from a long-ago conversation heard in the days when his scant years were presumed a barrier to understanding. But he could remember his mother, standing in a deep window, red sunset shining on her hair, eyes dark in her pale face, while a man, a tall, thin man with furrows between his eyes, twisted his glasses on a broad black ribbon and watched her.

"The shadow will hang over me all my life," she had said, and Charlotte had cried because her mother's voice sounded like tears.

The man had said: "No—no," but Don had known that he meant "Yes—yes!"

That night they had scurried away in the dark, mother, Charlotte, and Don. The shadow had begun the chase.

It kept it up, in the years which followed, swooping down and sending them flying from various little homes, always first to a large city, where they might not be easily traced. A dreadful thing, the shadow.

Often, waking in the night, Don saw

it hovering about his door, a weird shape, moving with the flicker of the hall gas jet, and wondered, shudderingly, how long it would be this time.

He hated halls. They were a prey to shadows. When he grew up he would build a house, a very big house, quite hall-less and without shadows.

"And we'll never move," planned Charlotte.

"And mother shan't work."

That pretty little Mrs. Ward, as she was patronizingly called, was always busy. She did anything and everything, from millinery to bookkeeping, from designing to mixing salads, work which called for no public appearance. She was ever willing to do overtime at night.

It was on one of those nights, when Don had called for her, and they were going home through the theater crowds, that they were halted at Woodward by the extremely uncivil traffic policeman. Mrs. Ward's hand on Don's arm, suddenly rigid, drew his attention. Ten years faded like mist before the sun. A tall, thin man with deep furrows between his eyes, sauntered toward them, holding his glasses by a broad black ribbon.

Mrs. Ward's lips moved as though she were trying out things to say. She looked as if she did not quite dare to be glad.

And then the man swung about,

swiftly, and disappeared in the crowd. Don thought his mother said: "He didn't see me! Oh, he didn't see me!" but he wasn't sure.

Next day Charlotte, returning from a noon shopping expedition with her mother, strode into Don's room, slammed the door, and exploded: "The beastly shadow's here again!"

Don sat up.

"You know we were out hunting for a suit that won't make me look like a young elephant. Oh, no, we didn't find one. They don't make any. We got a blue thing with a belt. I look like the back of a huck in it. Well, we were in that sundae place near Jefferson, getting ice cream, and mother was trying to make me think I didn't look as awful as I did, when some one at a table across the glass cases said, 'There, doesn't she look like Julia Fanshawe?' just like that, sort of excited, but soft, as if she didn't want us to hear."

"You—you mean you?"

"Mother, stupid! I look like a blond whale. It was a woman in black who said it, a slimy woman. She was sitting with a tall man who wore glasses, and he said, 'Nonsense!' without looking at us. But you could tell he had seen us first. Oh, I don't know how you could tell, you just could! And she said: 'I ought to know. I did enough sketches of her.' And he just growled."

"And—mother?"

"She kind of half got up and began to smile at him, but he wouldn't see her, so in a minute she hurried me out. And I hadn't finished my banana split. Then we stopped at a drug store, and she looked at the J's in the directory. And pretty soon she asked me if I'd care for Kentucky."

They exchanged long glances.

"I suppose we might as well care for it," said Don, at length.

He was right. They left for Coving-

ton that night, by a tiresomely intricate route.

On the way, Mrs. Ward did an odd thing. She had her hair bleached a wonderful snow-white. It had been such pretty hair, too, chestnut, with touches of gold at the tips of the curls.

"Do I," she asked her children as she took off her hat and veil and exhibited the result, "look very different?"

"You look like old scratch!" cried the frank Charlotte.

"People will think you're our grandmother!" said Don, dismayed.

Mrs. Ward was, strangely enough, pleased at that. It seemed to Don that she definitely broke with the past then, stopped looking wistfully back, stopped sobbing in the night when she thought nobody knew.

It was two years before the shadow put in its next appearance.

Don and Charlotte had taken a violent fancy to the cramped, dirty little city. They were fond of the dark, dingy double house, half of which sheltered them. They had, for the first time in their fugitive lives, found friends—young friends. They sang in the choir. They belonged to school clubs. They could not go half a dozen blocks along Scott or Madison Streets without receiving twice as many gay greetings from the lips of friends. They used to wonder, sometimes, if it all wasn't too perfect to last.

"Why don't we stay, anyway, and let the shadow do its darnedest?" Charlotte suggested as they walked home from choir practice one evening.

"Maybe it's forgotten us."

But even before they turned in at the little iron gate, and crossed the discolored brick walk, sunk all to one side, they felt the chill presence. They entered the badly lit hall, expecting what they found. The door of the front room was ajar. Within, kneeling be-



"The shadow will hang over me all my life," she had said.

fore a trunk, Mrs. Ward packed with the deft hands of long practice.

"Mother! We're not going?"

"Mother, we can't go!"

She looked up with the glint of a smile. She was good at smiling.

"You'll like it," she temporized; "it's the most beautiful country."

"Country!" they scoffed.

"What have we done?" demanded Charlotte.

"Nothing. There's a lovely school for girls. They wear little white suits."

"Yes, I'd look sweet in a little white suit, wouldn't I? See the size I am! You must tell us why this time."

Their pretty mother looked from her tall daughter to her taller son. "You mind leaving so much? I'm sorry. You *will* like it."

Grim silence answered her. She regarded her twisting fingers briefly.

"I have a—good position—in a—hotel."

"Don't you like the job you've got?"
"Y—no!"

"But all our friends are here. We don't know any one there, wherever it is. We love it here!"

"There's a train to-morrow at six."

"Is it the police?" asked Don, with white lips.

"Oh, no! It's a—very good position."

"What would happen if we stayed?"

"N-nothing. But you'd be—unhappy."

"Why? Why would we?"

But she would not tell. She was firm in the resolve that they should leave to-morrow, expressing their trunks in the sheltering dawn—the double house had been rented furnished—slipping away like guilty things.

Charlotte wept. Don, gulping down his feelings with the glass of water he had drawn at the sink, stayed in the kitchen longer than usual. He saw the paper protruding from the stove, with a sense of irritation, and lifted the lid

to crush it into the fire. The name "Julia Fanshawe" leaped at him, and he saved the sheet from the flames.

It was a ragged sheet, half burned already, headed by a blurry picture. Even with the name "Julia Fanshawe" attached, there was no doubt that it was intended for Mrs. Ward. Were there in the world two women with that tilt to their eyes, that trick of smiling? Smaller photographs of men below were labeled, respectively: "Jack Fanshawe" and "Derrek Jayne." The first was unfamiliar. There was no mistaking the second, with the broad, black-ribbed glasses, the lean, furrowed face.

The first had left only a brown, irregular triangle of print:

It will be glorious news to Julia Fan-
and her children, sufferin-
s under the stigma of
"Not Guilty" pronoun
when all the weight
was against her
real murderer had
received absolutio-
n died. But it ca
anguish i
Derrek Ja . . .

Don carried the paper to Charlotte, who was out on the sunken bricks, going through her reducing exercises with the animation of a rag doll. They examined it under the gnat-haunted electric light.

"Mother's name," said Charlotte uncertainly, "is Louise."

"Now," corrected Don.

"Who got—murdered?" She whispered the last word.

"Who was Jack Fanshawe? Our father?"

They viewed the newspaper portrait of him critically. There was a blur across his mouth and chin, but even so, he was strikingly handsome.

"She always says 'He's dead, dear,'" commented Charlotte.

"You're dead, if you're murdered."
Which is true enough.

They were up in the dark, using a flash light to help the expressman get their trunks down the uneven bricks. They locked the door of the dear double house when the morning was beginning to break. Their train pulled out of the smoky station while the depot was still a mass of electric light.

Don bought every paper that came aboard, finding only one reference to what he sought. It was headed "Knoxville."

Matthew Cole, self-confessed slayer of Jack Fanshawe, lies buried in an unmarked grave. Not far away rests his victim under the stone set up by their racing cronies after the disappearance of Fanshawe's beautiful wife.

"Was Jack Fanshawe our father?" he demanded, slipping into the cindery seat beside his mother.

He did not miss the way her hand closed hard on the book in her lap.

"No!" she said vehemently.

He hadn't expected that.

"Your father was William Ward. He died before Charlotte was born."

"Well, you knew Jack Fanshawe?"

She admitted that with a little shiver.

"And—Matthew Cole?"

"No. No. Not Matthew Cole."

"Then you knew Derrek Jayne, anyway?"

"I—used to," she said half tremulously. Then she turned to him almost fiercely. "Please don't talk about it, Don. It's all over. Everything's all over—at last. The shadow will never bother us again. There's no point in going over and over terrible things. Please never talk of it again."

What was the use after that?

The good position was assistant in an all-year-round hotel in the Virginia Blue Ridge. Mrs. Ward's duties were many and varied. Too many and too varied, according to Charlotte.

"She works like a horse!" grumbled the girl, when Don came home from his last year at college. "Makes me

sick and tired. She can't get out for a breath of air without some old cat wondering if she'd mind seeing if the mail's come in or wishing some one would run upstairs and get their medicine. The stuff they take! The only reason they're not poisoned is because they're too mean to die."

"I'll take her right out of it!" vowed Don.

But Mrs. Ward wouldn't go. She was contented. Charlotte needn't be left alone now, as she must be if her mother went back to millinery. But Don could help. He could entertain the chronically unpopular.

Don took a savage pleasure in that. It kept him so busy that afterward he couldn't remember just when the man arrived who presently became known at the inn as "little Mrs. Ward's millionaire." The guests used to argue as to whether or not he was really a millionaire, and disapprove of the way he haunted her. It was understood that he owned a string of journals and was here for his health. Of course, it was a big chance for her—no wonder she didn't discourage him—no wonder they spent hours on end talking to one another in confidential tones—but—

"The tabbies are giving you a treat to-morrow," Charlotte warned Don one August evening, as they entered the screened dining room. "They're taking you to the caves. You're to drive the whole seven in the Ritzwood car."

Don's glance went from the chair he had pulled out for his sister to the table where the seven sat. He ran a finger around the edge of his collar. Escort them through the famous grottoes of the Shenandoah! Old Mrs. Ritzwood with her inane questions, bossy Mrs. Bonner, the withered Sherrill sisters, Mrs. Callor, and her equally objectionable daughter, the giddy Miss Pinney, who looked forty and acted fourteen!

Mrs. Ward telegraphed a message of commiseration with her expressive



"Mother! We're not going?" "Mother, we can't go!" She looked up with a glint of a smile. She was good at smiling.

eyes. She was at the far end of the room with her millionaire.

"But I shan't do it," Don told Charlotte, after Miss Pinney had trotted over, ingénue fashion, to invite him.

"Yes, just the way you don't do all the other fool things they ask!"

The bossy Mrs. Bonner stated the time he was expected as she passed their table, and squelched his excuse.

He appeared, at the time appointed, on the terrace beside the car.

"I'd wreck the beastly thing," Charlotte whispered, "and break all their necks."

"I have a neck of my own."

He slid into the driver's seat, and grinned as a backward glance caught Charlotte shaking a plump fist at the wheels, but the grin faded as Miss Pinney's organdy ruffles were crushed against his arm. He wished he could follow Charlotte's advice. He shuddered when he remembered that after-

ward. Suppose he hadn't reached the caves at all?

There was a wait at the building outside the caverns' entrance. Don shut his teeth and endured it. He wished they could get on, where old Mrs. Ritzwood's insane queries as to how they got oxygen into the caves, and Miss Pinney's gushing reference to the Civil War shell found in a tree as "cute" might not be so painfully audible.

And then—

Came the reason for the wait. A slip of a girl in tailored blue. Her face was like a cameo, but there was fear in her blue eyes.

She was accompanied by an elderly gentleman, an anxious soul. Their name, which Don almost involuntarily saw him register, was inappropriate. It was Joy, Nathan Joy and daughter.

Miss Joy walked apart, obviously unseeing. Her father tried to interest her. "Hear what he says about those sentinels, my dear? Thousands of years to form the smallest part of one!" he would exclaim, to be rewarded by a blank glance that clearly consigned the stalagmite sentinels to oblivion.

Once, lagging behind, while the guide and Miss Callor struggled to outtalk each other, Don heard Mr. Joy say: "You'll never get over it, if you won't try to take an interest. There are marvels enough here—"

And the girl's: "I am. I'm—looking." But her blue eyes, fixed on the frozen cataract, all too plainly did not see the pearly, glistening thing.

"When I was in Italy—" came Miss Callor's disagreeable voice.

"Above you, inclined at an angle of forty-five degrees, is the shield of Ajax," hurried the guide.

"The Blue Grotto, they called it. It had water in it and ships—"

"Notice the veins in the shield, shown by the light placed above it—"

"So cute!" sighed Miss Pinney.

Mr. Joy, coming up to see the colors

in a fluted column, smiled a bleak, sarcastic smile. But, though Mrs. Ritzwood chose that moment to inquire what would happen if some one set the caves on fire, and Miss Callor differed emphatically with the guide about the naming of the Senate chamber, because there was something in Cheddar Cliffs, in the north of England, called something else, Miss Joy did not smile.

It was while Miss Callor was arguing that the priest who stands in the aisle of the cathedral in his ceremonial robes is really a woman, that Don heard Mr. Joy's enthusiastic: "Do see the angel—there—there near the ceiling—roof—whatever it is. Oh, yes, yes, yes, you can't help seeing it, Araminta!" and her swift: "Hush!"

Odd name, Araminta. Araminta Joy. Wasn't there a dancer called Araminta Joy?

Don gave her a drink from the crystal spring, eternally flowing, and learned that they were touring. Papa and she.

Somehow, he wasn't quite sure how, he managed to bring a reluctant, little, ringing laugh from her. Her father, who couldn't have heard what had made her laugh, smiled, too. He included Don eagerly. He almost insisted that Don and she should walk together. All at once Don's charges became dear. They were so many links between him and Araminta. Everything they said and did amused her. Everything in the caves became a proper wonder. Because of Don? He hoped so.

He was sorry when they came out again upon the wooded path.

The old fear came back to her eyes.

"All rot to take it like this, my dear. Think about what you've been seeing. The oyster shells—er—Natural Bridge—er—Whatyoucall'em's needle." Mr. Joy regarded her with helpless anxiety.

"I am."

"You were happy enough in there."

"I know. I am."

entangled. Thinks you'll elope with her, I s'pose."

The thought haunted Don. Elope with her. Why not? Why not?

He broached the subject, as he and Araminta watched the stars come out from their favorite gray rock above the inn.

"Oh, no! Oh, no, no, no! I didn't mean to let you fall in love with me. I didn't mean to let any one ever again."

"Because of the Blaine man? I know. I heard your father call you Araminta. I love you—Araminta."

"Please. Let me tell you. I was an unknown from California. I loved to dance. I used to dance at kermises—things like that. Then papa's cousin backed 'Why Genevieve,' and a special dancer went back on them, so he put me in. They made me a mystery. I caught on, somehow. I don't know how. Henry Blaine was one of a lot of men who were—attentive. I was supposed to encourage them—for business. But he fell in love, he said. Don't keep saying it doesn't matter. It does matter. He killed himself because I wouldn't see him."

"He was drinking. He wasn't sane. He's better dead."

"Papa's said all that. All my life people will say I killed him."

"Change your name to Ward."

"Don't you know the shadow would keep after me and after you?"

He began to say "No—no!" and stopped. Derrek Jayne had said that to Don's mother years ago. "Things don't run after you if you stand still," he amended. "We'll stand still and face it together."

She shook her head. "I'll stand still alone."

"Susan Ward sounds—"

"Don't let's argue!" She started down the pine-incrusted trail, but he caught her at the bend.

"But you care, don't you?"

"Please—Don."

"You do. I know you do."

"Listen. There's a car!" She slipped away again.

The car purred up the grade and stopped. A man got out as they darted across the terrace. The impact of Susan sent him staggering against a boxwood tree. Don saved Susan from the steps.

The man apologized, and Susan forgave him sweetly. Some one raised a curtain in the inn office, and light streamed on the newcomer. He was tall and thin, with a furrowed face. A broad black ribbon depended from his glasses.

They entered the hall. A lonesome bulb swinging on its cord by the stairs sent black shapes creeping to the farther corners. The shadow—come back with Derrek Jayne. Don wished he could warn his mother.

But it was Derrek Jayne who should have been warned. Mrs. Ward, checking over accounts at the desk, her millionaire smoking at her elbow, did not quiver an eyelash. Derrek Jayne stopped, went on, began to speak, stammered, flushed. His lips formed the name: "Julia!"

But Mrs. Ward indicated the register with a mere: "Room nineteen, second floor. You'll find it cool and pleasant now." As though he was an ordinary guest!

He signed, holding the pen between his third and fourth fingers, producing a backhand signature, and pushed the book to her, but she would not see. "My son will show you the way. After hours, you know."

Don led the way, and after an interval Derrek Jayne followed.

They met Charlotte, who shrank against the white wall. She was waiting when Don returned. "The shadow!" she whispered.

He pressed her plump fingers.

"Oh, dear, just as we get a chum!

Just as you and Susan—— It's too mean. Why don't you elope?"

"She won't have me."

"What's the matter with her? She's got to!"

"She's Araminta Joy."

"She's—— Oh! Why won't she?"

"That's why."

"Well, but she's our Susan. She's the girl we—we'll marry her anyway! Whether she likes it or not!"

Don smiled over that as he sought for Susan on the deserted verandas, and searched the starlit terrace and strip of road.

Through the lighted office window, he could see his mother turning toward her millionaire. Why couldn't the old bore give her a rest? She amused him all day. Did she have to play mountebank all day, too?

He could see the silly, swinging sign over her head: "We aim to please!" All very well. All ve-ry well, but she needn't be a slave!

Derrek Jayne strode in, and the millionaire effaced himself.

"This is a surprise, Julia. I've looked for you so long."

"Since Matthew Cole confessed?"

"You know I believed in you."

"I thought so, until that time in Detroit. Then, when I needed some one, you——"

Her son woke to the fact that he was listening, and moved on.

As he sought in the upper balconies for Susan Araminta, he saw Derrek Jayne come out of the garage with a sleepy chauffeur, pile his bags into a car, and depart along the winding road. Giant shadows fled before the headlights.

Charlotte called: "Don!" cautiously from the terrace.

He whispered a loud: "Ye-es!"

"C'mon down! Mother wants you!"

Susan Araminta was on the high stool beside Mrs. Ward when Don came in. Charlotte had a protecting arm about

her. It seemed to Don that the millionaire might have had sense enough to go away. But he sat in the black mission rocker, facing the desk, as if he belonged there.

"Want me, mother?" Don's eyes were on his mother, his mind on Susan Araminta.

"Yes. I—you see——"

Charlotte broke in. "I told mother about Susan being Araminta and not marrying us."

"So I want to explain to her and to you——"

"She's going to tell us about the shadow," elucidated Charlotte.

"You may—you probably——"

Her millionaire shifted his position. "I might get ahead faster. I don't know how much you know, Don——"

Since when had mother's millionaire the right to call him Don?

"But here it is: When you and Charlotte were very little, your mother married a man named Jack Fanshawe, a poor sort, a gambler, racing man, with nothing to recommend him except a handsome face. He was not even straight with his friends. He was cruel to your mother. It was known that she was miserable, that she had bitter quarrels with him, that he ill treated her——"

Her children drew protectingly closer to her.

"She had a cousin, a third or fourth cousin, named Derrek Jayne."

"He was like a brother to me," she put in softly.

"One night Derrek stopped at the Fanshawes', and found Jack in a black rage, your mother bearing his bruises. Derrek urged her to leave, said he would take her away. She agreed that he might take her to her grandfather with you children, and he went to bring a carriage, while she stole up to dress you. When she came down, Jack Fanshawe lay on the floor, dead. His revolver was thrown beside him. An

open window showed how the assassin had come and gone. Foolishly enough, she closed and locked it."

"I remember being cold."

"A maid found her standing with the revolver in her hand. You can see how the weight of circumstantial evidence was against her. Every one knew how they quarreled. She bore the bruises he had inflicted. The story of the window seemed absurd. The maid had heard Derrek Jayne begging her to go away. It was easy to imagine Jack Fanshawe had also heard. There was a clear case against her."

The hand of Susan Araminta stole into that of Mrs. Ward.

"Julia Fanshawe was the sensation of the day. Few doubted her guilt, but every one sympathized. Even the prosecution was glad when the verdict was announced. It should have been 'Not proven.' After her release she disappeared. Until Matthew Cole confessed, twelve years later, but one person in the world believed in her innocence."

"I couldn't go on living there like that. I'd tried to prove it wasn't true, and I couldn't. I thought if I began all over again the children need never know."

Her millionaire went on dispassionately: "Cole said Jack Fanshawe had deliberately given him a wrong tip, swindled him out of his last cent. Said that if Julia had been declared guilty he would have given himself up, but under the circumstances— Curious things, men's minds."

"But why did we keep running away?" insisted Charlotte.

"I—sometimes I saw people I knew. Or a newspaper man recognized me. I was afraid you'd be pointed out as the children of a murderer."

"We'd have believed in you!" they declared stoutly.

Don turned to the millionaire, who was fingering an inn circular in carefully steady hands. "What did you mean about one person in the world believing she was innocent?"

"A newspaper man."

"Who was he?"

"He followed the case. You'd hardly remember him."

Mrs. Ward hurried away from that topic. "When Charlotte told me about Susan, I thought— Don't you see, Susan, that you can let Don share your shadow since he's borne mine so long?"

Susan Araminta kissed her.

"Perhaps you and Don want to go to your father—"

But it was Charlotte who led the way to the door.

"But, mother—"

"Come on, Don! For goodness' sake—"

Their voices drifted back.

"The old shadow did me a good turn at last," from Don.

Charlotte's: "I'm going. I seem to be in the way everywhere—you and Susan, and mother and her newspaper man—"

"Mother and her millionaire!"

"Don! Can't you see anything?"

The newspaper man who had believed in her put down the inn circular and leaned to Mrs. Ward. "And now, after all this, won't you devote a little time and thought to me?"

She floundered in the sea of new happiness, and suddenly, after the years of strain, became almost hysterically unable to express herself, and so fell back on the words of the inn circular.

"We aim to please!" she quoted wickedly.



THE OLD RED ROAD

By Martha McCulloch-Williams

A HARLEQUIN of highways,
The road runs up and down,
Now bending to the byways,
Now making straight for town.
No steep, rough hill can bar it,
No hollow deep delay,
Ragged sweetbriers star it
All through the merry May.

It ran once as it listed,
A vagrant, gypsy-free,
Through oak woods tall and misted
With many a dogwood tree.
Now fences curb and scant it,
As woods to plowland melt;
Yet valiant wildlings haunt it
In every hedgerow belt.

We say in idle fashion,
It runs to town; in sooth
It also runs, my masters,
Back to the nation's youth.
The wheel-worn ramps that bound it
The pioneers begun;
A trace, their wagons found it,
Blazed toward the setting sun.

A well-worn road they shaped it,
Team after team in train,
For those who tamed the wilderness
A virgin world to gain.
They passed, those men of might and
fight,
Yet left a lusty brood
To hold the land, to rule the land,
In honor to the blood.

Were they but their great-grandsons,
They would have cars of power,
Eke turnpikes built for speeding
At sixty-odd an hour,
Such as runs yonder, hard and smooth,
Freighted with all that flowed
In elder ways and elder days
Along the old, red road.





On Rejuvenating *the Features*

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

AT this writing an Englishman has come to us with pictures of five women who, in his estimation, are the most beautiful in all Great Britain. His object is to match them with the five most beautiful Americans. And the race is on.

It is extremely fascinating to one interested in this highly entertaining matter to observe that the pictures offered for choice and comparison are those of very young girls—or they are early photographs of middle-aged women, even grandmothers now, who were the beauties of twenty-five years ago.

One pauses here to speculate as to why the Gibson girl has completely lost those features which have made her so famous; why the young society matron of local fame does not resemble the early pictures of herself which she offers; and why a well-known actress, though of undoubted charm to-day,

lacks utterly those qualities of youth so much sought after at the moment. And, furthermore, is youth alone lovely?

Now the face in some persons undergoes so tremendous a change from the years of adolescence to those of full maturity that many become unrecognizable to the friends of earlier days. The surprised exclamation, "Why, I would never have known her!" is familiar to us all. On looking over old photographs, especially family groups, it is often extremely difficult to pick out one whom one knows so well to-day, but who bears faint, if any, resemblance to her former self.

This fact was brought home to an acquaintance of mine in a startling manner the other day. Looking in her mirror in the usual manner while dressing, her attention was arrested by what appeared to be a fresher, younger edition of herself. Gazing spellbound, she studied the face reflected there, and

amazingly discerned the girl of eighteen whom she had quite forgotten. A miracle had been silently wrought, and almost without her knowledge. Like the Arab who folds his tent and silently steals away, had the weariness, the drooping lines, the careworn expression, the impress—not of years or work, but of emotions—all these silently had stolen away under the benign influence of fresh air, sunshine, a rational diet, and long hours of sweet repose.

Oh, the beneficence of Mother Nature! How wondrous are her gifts, how simple, yet how little understood and appreciated. No, we do not want fresh air—we are habituated to stuffy rooms. We do not want sunshine—we much prefer the glare of artificial lights. A rational diet is distressingly monotonous, while long hours of sweet repose? Save the mark! Life is too short as it is. "We are a long time dead," as some are prone to remind us.

Yet with all this we want youth, and we need boundless youth to cope with present-day conditions—not only the *vitality* of youth, but the *appearance* of youth. In splendid health, the features on reaching their first maturity—in a girl we will place this at eighteen—are full grown, and although character has not been completely formed at this time and experience leaves its impressions, nevertheless the features should retain their original outlines throughout life. They seldom do. Why?

The face has fifty-five muscles with which to express emotion. Through their nervous connections these muscles are related to every part of the brain and to every internal organ. Every thought, every act, every particle of food we consume, every passing phase of health, from the slightest malaise to pulsating vitality, show upon the countenance.

In describing the muscles, it is usual to state that they arise from the bony framework of the face and are inserted

into the nose, corners of the mouth, and lips. But this gives a very poor idea of their insertion. They drop fibers into the skin along their course, so that there is scarcely a part of the face which has not its little fiber to move it. The habitual recurrence of good or evil thoughts, the indulgence in particular modes of life, call into play corresponding sets of muscles, which, by producing folds and wrinkles, give, in time, a permanent cast to the features.

Why do some persons change in the course of years so much more than others, all things in their lives being equal? It is generally supposed that every one possesses an equal number of facial muscles, also that the internal organs are exactly alike in all. Neither assumption is correct.

In some persons portions of the labial, lips; buccal, cheeks; and other muscles are absent. So the little fibers are greatly lacking in some and very plentiful in others. Compare one who is very grave and sedate with one who is very mirthful, and the muscular formation at the corners of the mouth will be found very different.

The more highly developed the muscular system, the greater are those emotions which we attribute to the heart—love, sympathy, warmth, and so on; hence the feelings in those persons are apt to create a constant relaxation of the features quite foreign to one with a cold, selfish temperament.

Again, persons with deep, prominent chests never develop loss of featural contour to the extent of some others because their emotions are not lasting; hence they retain in age a more youthful manner and a smoother face than others.

A person whose constitutional vigor is such that all his tissues are in a splendid condition of elasticity never develops that sagginess which is the

cause of featural obliteration until old age is reached.

Some persons develop folds of flesh as well as wrinkles upon the upper eyelid, and this extra fold falls over the eyeball at its outer edge, quite transforming the early appearance and expression of the eyes. Habitual mirth creates a sunburst of wrinkles at the outer corners of the lids, while folds *under* the eye, due to various causes, lend a different aspect to the face.

The original contour of the mouth has much to do with its later development. Straight, firm lips on a good square chin have a better chance to retain their youthful lines than a mouth which curves downward over a weak, bony formation covered with adipose tissue.

The original, or acquired, conformation of the underlying bony framework has much to do with featural changes year by year. For instance, congenital defects of the skeletal substance show themselves less in youth than later on in life. All hollows in the countenance denote weakness. If these hollows are natural, the defects are constitutional; if temporary, they have been acquired and can be remedied. The commonest source of acquired hollows in the cheeks is loss of teeth. A small, narrow, retreating chin, or one which hollows inward near the under lip, discloses constitutional weakness of the kidneys; hence such individuals should give especial heed to these organs. Hollow cheeks in the lower part of the face show weak digestion and poor assimilative capacity, therefore persons so constructed should study their digestive limitations and never partake of food that is in the slightest degree difficult for their organs to handle.

Hollow places in front of the ears show the same weakness. Here lies the parotid gland; the hollows denote absence or degeneracy of this gland, and in its place usually there are

wrinkles. We may then assume that the salivary glands are small and secrete little saliva. Since digestion begins in the mouth with the conversion of starches into sugar by the action upon them of saliva, a weak and defective state of the nutritive system results, which prevents a proper amount of blood being manufactured.

Generally speaking, persons with weak salivary glands should eat little starch, but the diet should be suited to each system, as every one is a law unto himself. With diet as the paramount foundation goes proper exercise and clothing, sunlight, pure air, and water. These fundamentals should be considered as first in the scale of rejuvenation.

It must be borne in mind that just as no two persons are alike, so no two faces are exactly alike. Muscle dominates one face, fat another, bone another. Furthermore, the same face differs markedly on the two sides.

Now, how can the youthfulness of our features be retained, and how can they be restored? Naturally, the features which show the deepest changes are the eyelids and the mouth.

Actors, when making up the face for old age, after giving a gray, unhealthy color to the skin, so change the eyes and mouth that the underlying cast of features is completely changed. Indeed, some "character" actors are so successful at make-up that their best friends are unable to recognize them in the play.

To retain the youthful contour of the face we must call a halt on the featural grimaces of which many of us are guilty. The habitual practice of throwing the muscles into various lines denoting the manifold emotions of which we are capable lies at the root of most featural changes. Ill health, weariness, fatigue must be combated. Brain workers must take long hours of rest; especially must the eyes be given their

full quota, as continued application, especially concentration, causes remarkable changes in the eyelids. Of supreme importance is the early and continued care of the teeth. With the loss of these the jaws shrink, and while artificial dentures prevent the muscles from sinking in, the loss of bony structure in the jaws themselves is permanent and in time communicates itself to the countenance.

Those who use the eyes a great deal should make a practice of bathing the lids several times daily with very cold water to which a mild astringent has been added. Iced tea is good. A saturated solution of boracic-acid water is excellent. A mere daub with a moistened cloth is not what is meant, but continued applications consuming at least ten minutes. In a month a surprising change will be effected.

A pleasing, optimistic expression must be deliberately cultivated if it is not natural, for otherwise the features droop early in life. This is especially the case with the mouth, upon which subject a volume could be written. When the mouth slopes downward abruptly at the sides so that the line there is already observable in youth, every precaution must be taken to give it an upward or outward trend, or it will carry down with it the cheeks, the sides of the nose, and the chin.

Preventive measures to offset the almost universal tendency to featural changes are offered daily by friction, which stimulates the underlying tissues and the circulation, followed by the use of astringent washes, toilet vinegars, and so on. Every morning on arising the face and neck should be doused with very cold water. This tones the muscles, whereas warm or hot water relaxes them.

The misuse of cosmetics, the use of unsuitable toilet preparations, as well as overzealous massage, have much to

do with featural changes. Every one must study her peculiarities and cater to them. Thus, if soap is injurious, a cleansing cream is advised, and if a cleansing cream proves worthless, a cleansing lotion is demanded.

It was, of course, in Paris that the use of ice for purposes of rejuvenating the features first came into vogue. Twice a day a flat piece of ice the size of the palm and, if need be, covered with a bit of gauze, is slowly, but firmly, passed over the face in rotary movements, using a firmer pressure on the upward stroke. Massage slowly so that the freezing or bracing of the muscles produces a distinct shock, followed by a reaction which brings the blood coursing to the surface in a brilliant color. The effect is *tightening*; the tissues are pulled back into their normal lines, the skin becomes of smooth, velvety texture, suffused with color.

Who has not heard of the *masque d'or* and of its beautiful originator, Ninon de l'Enclos? This marvelous woman lived many centuries ago, yet her fame endures. So extraordinarily did she preserve the original beauty of her face and form that she was called "The Woman Who Never Grew Old." Adorable as she was in youth, so she continued to be until her death at the age of ninety-one.

It is a well-known fact that Madame de l'Enclos wore, during her sleep, a metal mask of gold to hold her features firmly in position. Times have changed, great courts and courtesans no longer exist, but youth and beauty are always interesting.

Who wears metal masks to-day? We do not know. Many who can afford them doubtless do, but the suggestion can be carried out to a certain extent with other materials and similar results achieved. Any object devoutly sought can be attained with persistent effort. To wear, either during sleep, or for a

few hours, a thin layer of gauze covered with a suitable cream, snugly bound on with bandages in cross-bar fashion, holds the tissues firmly in place, creates warmth, so inducing perspiration, stimulates the circulation, softens and whitens the skin.

Always on removal of the mask, the

skin must be treated with an astringent or with ice, otherwise the creams used defeat the object.

NOTE.—Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer any questions, as well as to help correspondents with further suggestions, on face masks and appropriate toilet preparations.

WHAT READERS ASK

H. M.—Frequent references to complexion troubles are made in these columns, as well as in occasional articles on the subject. I am sorry you failed to see any of these. However, if you will send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope, and repeat your request, I will gladly give you data which will be of great help to you.

JULIA X.—I will be very glad to send you formula for the brows and lashes, and that of a celebrated eyewash. Many people do not realize the immense beauty value that lies in caring for the eyes and their settings. I do not refer to defects in vision, but to the mucous membrane covering the eyes and lids, and the many afflictions of the lashes and brows due to carelessness and neglect.

MRS. DELLA D.—No, I will not give you a depilatory. I have seen too much evil result from the use of this method of removing superfluous hair. There is a wax treatment, also a French ointment, with both of which I will gladly acquaint you upon receipt of a self-addressed, stamped envelope, repeating your request.

JEENY F.—I am convinced that nothing will build you up so rapidly as the iron food tonic in powder form, because it is immediately absorbed into the system. So you may safely send to me for the name of this splendid product.

PREMATURE.—Your state of mind will prevent any improvement of your tissues, no matter what course you pursue. Cultivate a cheerful optimism first; then, by means of exercise and massage, you can restore your muscles. Remember, no external treatment alone can do this. It will assist slightly by tightening the skin, and the following formula will aid you in doing this:

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

Powdered tannin, 25 grains; oil of sweet almonds, 200 grains; white wax, 100 grains; tincture of benzoin, 50 grains, rosewater, 50 grains. Rub well into the parts with gentle massage. To get actual results the underlying muscles must be exercised.

MARRIED.—I quite agree with you that a white, full throat is a beautiful feature. If, as you say, you have never worn tight collars, and still have a discolored neck, it calls for more than ordinary treatment. An article will appear on this subject soon. I am giving you here a lotion for external use that is almost specific in such conditions:

Borax, 10 grains; limewater, 2 ounces; essence of jasmine, 1 ounce; oil of almonds, 1 ounce. This can be used on the face as well as the neck. If your neck is thin, nothing will help you so much as a fattening cream and breathing exercises. I will gladly send you printed instructions if you will make proper application.

ANXIOUS.—Daily scrubbing with loofa mitts and a bland soap will gradually remove "goose flesh" on your arms. I do not advocate the use of depilatories. Electrolysis is the only sure method for the destruction of superfluous hair. Try to bleach the hair with equal parts of genuine peroxide of hydrogen and ammonia applied every day. Let the solution dry into the skin. Apply with absorbent cotton. I advise, in preference to anything else, the use of a French ointment for devitalizing superfluous hair. It must be used continuously over a long period of time. It gradually destroys the hair follicles, differing thus from electrolysis by not stimulating the latent hair cells into activity or marring the skin. I will tell you how to procure this ointment, also of a wax treatment in vogue at present, upon receipt of a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

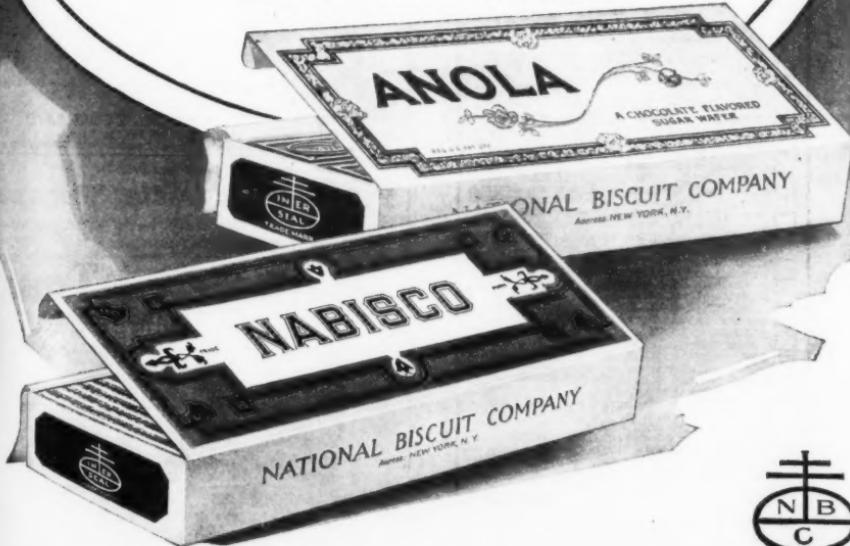


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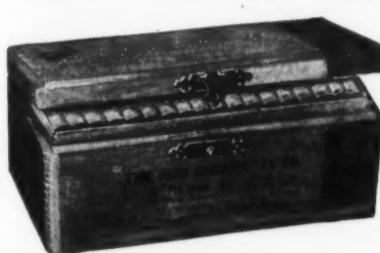
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It leaves the skin in soft and smooth condition. No lotion is needed. The cream itself forms a soothing lotion, due to palm and olive oils.

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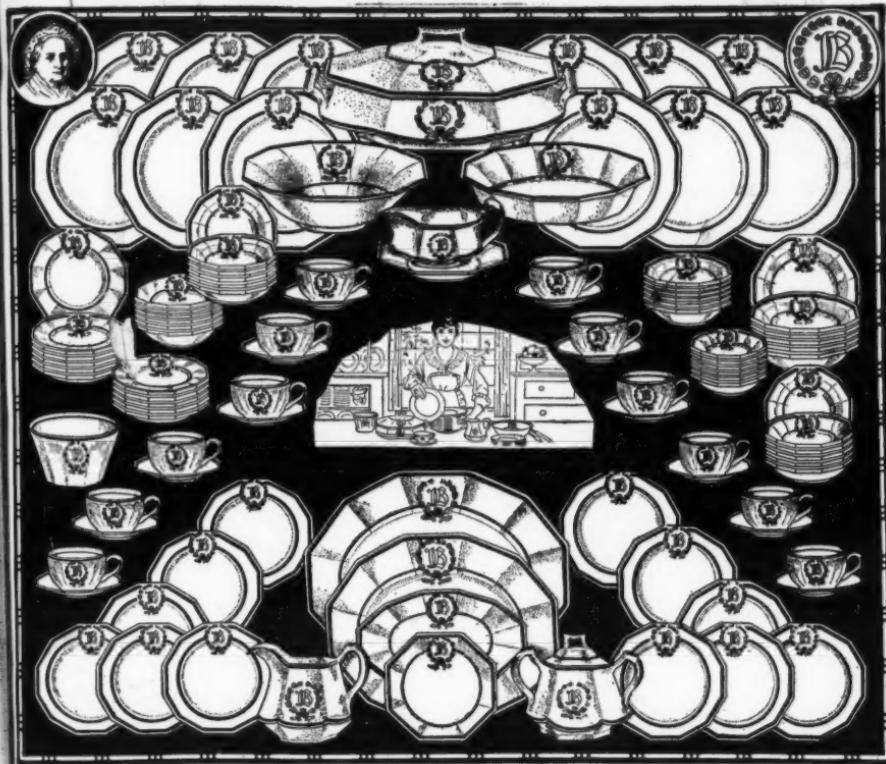
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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



That office boy was a good picker

IT WAS my busy day
AND I told the boy.
I COULD not see.
ANY VISITORS.
AND HE popped back.
AND SAID there was.
A GENTLEMAN outside.
WHO WISHED to see me.
AND I said "No."
BUT I guess the boy.
IS LIKE my wife.
AND DOESN'T know
WHO'S BOSS.
FOR BACK he comes.
AND SAYS the man.
WANTS JUST a word.
AND I told the boy.
I COULD tell the man.
JUST WHERE to go.
IN JUST three words.
BUT THE boy came back
AND SAID the man.

COULD SPOT me one.
HIS BUSINESS needed.
JUST TWO words.
AND I'M a sport.
AND CURIOUS too.
SO IN he came.
AND HANDED me.
SOME CIGARETTES to try.
AND SAID "They Satisfy."
AND I will state.
HE SAID something.



"THEY satisfy"—that says it. Never were finer tobaccos used in any cigarette and never were tobaccos more carefully and skillfully blended. Chesterfields give you all that any cigarette could give, plus a certain "satisfy" quality that is exclusively theirs. The blend can't be copied.

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